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Gough.
Ireland Add^d. 8th 116



THE
CATHOLIC RELIGION

OF
ST. PATRICK, AND ST. COLUMB-KILL,

AND THE

OTHER ANCIENT SAINTS OF

IRELAND.

TRULY SET FORTH FROM ROMAN CATHOLIC HISTORIANS,
TRADITIONS OF THE COUNTRY, RECORDS, AND
AUTHENTIC DOCUMENTS.

"But this I confess unto thee, that, after the way which they call *Hersey*,
so worship I the God of my Fathers; believing all things that are written
"in the law, and the Prophets."—*Acts* xxiv. 14.

DUBLIN:

PRINTED BY M. GOODWIN, 29, DENTMARK-STREET.

1822.

Gough Ireland Add^{to}



P R E F A C E.

THIS work is, for the most part, compilation; the learned will easily know the sources from whence it is chiefly taken, but circumstances have prevented me from making due acknowledgments wherever I am indebted to others, which happens, indeed, in almost every page. The world will do an anonymous publisher the justice of believing, that he does not withhold those acknowledgments from unworthy motives. If this tract appears to soar high in point of learning, it is because it has been borne aloft upon eagle's wings—scarcely more than the motive for publishing it belongs to the author; and this, he humbly hopes, is Glory to God, and good will towards men."

With respect to original authorities, many of those that do not bear upon the particular subject of the work, which is the religious doctrines of the antient Irish, are taken at second hand; because the works of the authors alluded to are not to be found in the University of Dublin: but, where the main question was concerned, I have, almost in every instance, consulted the works, &c.

of the authors whom I have quoted ; excepting, however, Sedulius and Claudius, with respect to whom I have relied upon the well tried fidelity of others, that the extracts which I have taken through them are faithfully given.

It is necessary to mention, that every text of Scripture that is brought forward as authority is taken, either from the Douay version of the Old, or the Rhemish of the New Testament ; by which I am not to be understood as setting up either of these as being a pure version of the word of God, for with that question I have no business here, but merely as strengthening my argument, by giving the texts to which I refer in a sense which cannot be denied by the Roman Catholics, or said by them to be perversions of the original.

INTRODUCTION.

MY FELLOW COUNTRYMEN,

PERMIT me to lay before you, as shortly as I possibly can in a matter of such importance, and requiring so much research, the Catholic Faith, as it was professed and taught in this Island, which has been named the Island of Saints, by those men, on account of whose superior sanctity, learning, and zeal, Ireland has been given this name. Their memory is justly held in reverence by you—and, let what will be the opinion of this person, or that, in the present day, you will all with one accord allow, that whatever those holy men taught your ancestors to believe, must be the true faith for you to receive, if there be any sense in the argument which is often put before you, and with truth, that the old religion of your country was the religion of the Apostles.

The Pope has lately addressed to you two letters, the first “to the Irish Prelates on the subject of Bible Schools;”—and the second, to the Prelates of the Roman Catholic Church of England and Ireland, commanding them to put in force the directions given in the first—both of them enjoin the clergy of that persuasion to prevent your children from being sent to schools in which the Scriptures are read; and they have been followed up with exertions to discourage the distribution of Bibles among you, and to supply their use by giving to you Catechisms, and other works of mere human composition.

If, my friends, your hearts declare to you that this is right, let it go on—and, if it be right, it has my prayer to Him who disposes all things, that it may work for your good: but, if your hearts cannot, in this enlightened age, admit of the justice of your being kept from reading a book which God caused to be written for your learning—if you are thus compelled to disobey the express command of Christ himself, to search the Scriptures—you will at least do me the justice to attend, while I shew to you the error of some of those reasons which are given, why you should not only listen to men, in preference to God, but why you should not learn the Word of God at all.

To come, therefore, at once to the great object of this address.—The first sentence of the letter just alluded to, is thus:—“the prediction of our Lord Jesus Christ, in the parable of “the sower, that sowed good seed in his field, but, while people “slept, his enemy came, and sowed tares upon the wheat, is, “to the very great injury indeed of the Catholic faith, seen “verified in these our own days, particularly in Ireland:”—and

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echoing this, the letter of the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Tuam commends "your firm adherence to the religion of your ancestors;" and the tone of this letter throughout is, as if the religion which the Bible without note or comment teaches, is an innovation upon the ancient faith of this Island of Saints.

These remarks, my fellow countrymen, assume an error for their very foundation—to wit, that the Roman Catholic religion, which is now very general in this Island, was the original faith of the people of Ireland; of course, that the head of that religion, the Pope, and that Church, always possessed the highest authority in Spiritual matters in this island, until the religion of the Bible, which Archbishop Kelly has called "the mystery of iniquity," ventured to come in, to sow the tares among the wheat—they assume that the Roman Catholic religion was that which was professed by those Holy men above mentioned; in short, that it is the old religion of the country.

Now, as I know you to be remarkably attached to your ancestors, and to the memory of the old people, and the customs of your native island—and, as I know also, that you are as remarkable for your love of justice and of truth, I am sure you will be both attentive and candid in reading the few following pages, which will shew to you, that Christianity was taught and received in Ireland, probably one thousand years before the authority of the Pope was fully acknowledged in it, and above three hundred before he sent any religious persons to preach it here—that St. Patrick, St. Columbkil, and all the saints of their times, on account of whom the country got the name of the Island of Saints, professed the religion of the Bible, and one very different from that which you now are taught by your Priests: and I will shew you the precise time when almost every opinion which both St. Columbkil and St. Patrick, as well as the Professors of the religion of the Bible, agree in thinking to be wrong—I say, I will shew you the time exactly when they first began to be taught, and why they were invented. It is thus, my fellow countrymen, that I will prove to you, that a religion very different from your present faith, was the religion of your ancestors—and, therefore, that the good people who teach your children the Bible in their schools, are not the agents of the enemy who sowed the tares among the ancient good seed that was scattered plentifully in this land. My friends, it has always been said against the Reformation, which the religion of the Bible brought about, exactly as it has been reported to be said by the Pope now; that the religion above alluded to is a new thing—and it has been asked, where it was before the Reformation took place? but I can make it plain to you, that what is now called the Roman Catholic Religion, is a new thing in this country; that it was not

the old religion and faith of St. Patrick; that he, and all your ancient saints, were members of a Hierarchy altogether independent of Rome; and that those who would instruct you in the Bible, are your best friends, who would lead you back to the ancient principles of the truly Catholic Church, and of St. Patrick, from which you have departed.

It is a matter of very little consequence, my friends, by what name the Christian be called—and whether that name be Roman Catholic, or Protestant, is of small importance. The question with God will be—not, are you of this denomination, or of that? but, are you really of the faith required by Jesus Christ, are you “born of water, and of the Spirit?” for, without this, you “cannot enter into the kingdom of God!” away then, with the fears and the clamours respecting proselytizing—I have not yet seen the truly religious man, who cares for conversion in the name merely; while I hope that all real Christians, of all denominations, insist upon the necessity of a conversion of the heart.

You will allow, my fellow countrymen, that any religion which is not the religion of the Bible, and that which belonged to the first Christians, requires to be reformed; and, of course, if the Roman Catholic teaches any thing new that is not to be found in the Bible, or was not held by the first Christians, it ought to be avoided—let us then put the case at issue between us both upon the proof of this; and let us remember the importance of finding out what is the truth—for it is not a decision which will affect our bodies merely, and this only for a time, but concerns the happiness of our souls to all eternity. And, Oh! may the God of all truth put into your hearts, and into mine, both that love to Him, which will lead us to search for the truth, with sincerity; and that love to each other, which flows from love to God, and will direct us how to speak the truth in charity: and, thirdly, may we possess that real love to ourselves, which will make us determine to form, with God's assistance and grace, a candid choice for our good, in a matter of such alarming consequence. Upon our right faith in Christ our only hope of Salvation depends—and it is as much as our never-dying souls are worth, to endeavour to ascertain what that right faith is; and, whether or not, Penance, by which we pretend to assist Christ in the saving of our souls—Purgatories, which are much the same—Intercessions of Saints, and prayers to the Virgin Mary, be not doctrines that take away from the glory of a jealous God, by sharing the praise of our redemption with angels, with men, with saints, and with ourselves: and whether or not they be, as they seem to me, directly against the declarations of Christ, “I am the way”—“no man cometh to the Father, but by me.”*

* Rhemish version,

(John xiv. 6.) and contradictory to the testimony of the great Apostle St. Peter himself, "There is no other name under heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts iv. 12.)

I do not intend to dwell upon any thing in this address which cannot be proved from the works of writers of the best authority; and who are, by the way, chiefly considered, by the Roman Catholics, to have been of their persuasion. I shall not rest principally upon such authorities, (however they may be esteemed among Protestants,) as Archbishop Usher, and others of our Church, although I must occasionally notice them.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION OF CHRISTIANITY INTO IRELAND.

I SHALL first inquire at what period Christianity was introduced into Ireland; and then examine what were the doctrines and opinions of the earliest preachers thereof.

A great number of different accounts are given of the first preachers of Christianity in this land; and it is supposed to have been visited by the disciples of Christ within one hundred years after his crucifixion. This has been commonly said. The following facts are certain, that it was not brought first, either into Ireland, or Britain, by the disciples of St. Peter; but that, when St. Patrick came as an apostle into Ireland, in the year of our Lord 430, and St. Austin, into England, in the year 596, they both of them found that Christianity had arrived into these places a long time before them. My business is chiefly with Ireland, and I prove this assertion thus. It appears, from unquestionable authority, that Celestius, who mightily opposed the See of Rome, about the year 414, was an Irishman. Gennadius (*de script. Eccl. c. 44.*) calls him "Irish and noble," and gives the authority of a letter written to his parents; he had many followers among his countrymen; and, from what is recorded of him, Pinkerton justly concludes (*Enquiry, vol. ii. p. 261.*) "that by means of intercourse with Britain, Christianity had made some progress in Ireland in the fourth century." The native country of Celestius is put beyond all doubt by St. Jerome; who, in the third book of his preface to Jeremiah, distinctly describes him as being Irish; and speaks of his bold and open preaching, as being like to the barking of Cerberus.*

* If we look into the preface of the *Transactions of the Ibero-Celtic Society*, lately published, (p. 21.) we shall find that Ollioh Olum, King of Munster, who died, according to the latest accounts of the Irish annalists,

We are informed in the Ecclesiastical History of the venerable Bede, who wrote about the year 731, of many interesting facts respecting the ancient mode of fixing the time for the celebration of Easter, which throw considerable light upon the early conversion of the Irish to Christianity. He tells us, (lib. iii. c. 25.) that our church, and that of the ancient Britons, (now the Welsh, the old inhabitants of England,) differed from that of Rome, in their manner of fixing that time; and that, to settle the disputes, which were very warm upon the subject, Oswi, King of Northumberland, called a Council at Whitby, in Yorkshire, in the year 664; at which the famous St. Colman, your countryman, whose name is familiar to many of you, and who was then Archbishop of York, entered into dispute with Wilfred, a Saxon Priest, upon the question. St. Colman defended the Irish method of calculating the day, upon which Easter should be holden; saying, that it had been prescribed by St. John, whose disciples had been founders of the Irish church. "I marvel," he exclaimed, "how some can call that absurd, in which we follow the example of so great an Apostle; one who was thought worthy of reposing upon the bosom of his Lord: and can it be believed, that such men as our venerable Father Columbkil, and his successors, would have thought, or acted, things contrary to the precepts of the sacred pages?" I shall return to this Council again; my present business is to shew, that the great St. Colman, in this transaction, quotes the authority of St. Columbkil himself, to justify him in the assertion—that our native Church had derived its regulations from the disciples of St. John, and not from those of St. Peter.

It was the tradition of our forefathers, that several of their peculiar opinions, which differed from the Roman, were introduced among them by Christian Missionaries from Asia; and the first preacher of that religion in this country has been said to have been taught by St. Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons, who was the pupil of Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, who had himself learned these holy doctrines from St. Ignatius, the immediate disciple of St. John. The truth of this tradition is confirmed by the abovementioned expressions of St. Colman; who likewise declared thus: "This Easter, which I use to observe, I received from my elders, who sent me Bishop hither; which all our fathers, men beloved of God, are known to have celebrated after the same manner." Again, "It is the same

A.D. 254, was said to be the author of a poem, the allusions of which demonstrate that the writer was at least acquainted with the name of Christianity. The learned author of this preface takes occasion, from this circumstance, to doubt, that this King wrote the poem; but I think the implication may, with equal fairness, be made, that he was a Christian Prince.

" which the blessed Evangelist, St. John, the disciple specially " beloved by our Lord, with all the churches that he did over- " see, is read to have celebrated." These expressions, thus publicly delivered by the Archbishop of York, in a Council of the year 664, uncontradicted then in point of fact, and recorded since by Roman Catholics writers of such character as the venerable Bede as containing truth, demonstrate that persons independent altogether of the See of Rome had, in times even then far remote, taught Christianity in Ireland, with certain peculiarities to which that See was entirely averse. The resignation of St. Colman of the See of York, and his return to his native country, upon the Council settling the point against his principles, prove, not only the importance of the question in the eyes of the people of that day, but the sincerity of the Irish Saint. I shall return again to this subject.

But, equally independent of the See of Rome, and nearly an hundred years before the visit of St. Patrick into Ireland, there existed an order of Monks in this country. See abundant proofs of the fact in O'Connor's *Rerum Hibern. Script. Proleg.* i. p. lxxviii. Their rule was that which was invented by St. Athanasius, a Greek Father, and Bishop of Alexandria in Egypt, and was therefore called the Egyptian: their office was the Greek, and not the Roman: and, even in their mode of tonsure, they differed from similar establishments of the Roman Church. This order is in many things remarkable, and has since been known by the name of " Culdees;" and one of the most eminent members of it was our far-famed St. Columbkille, who is considered in the Martyrology of Donegal, and by Colgan, as joint patron with St. Patrick of Ireland, and whose name is as familiar to every Irish ear, as that of St. Patrick himself. It is indeed connected with some of the most venerated places in Ireland, as the Island of Rathfriland, Derry, &c.; for he founded, as Jocelin says, 100 monasteries, and established many churches. (See Smith's *Life of Col.* p. 17, and 152.)* He wrote a rule for this order, which is still extant, and which is to be found among other places in Goldastus (*Parænetic:*) and to which I refer you to discover, if you can, any regulation which enforces any of the peculiar doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church. The members of this order formed a kind of College, which was almost entirely employed in the education of youth; it was not only independent of the See of Rome, (a point to which I shall hereafter return,) but of the Bishop of the district wherein the Abbey was situate; the Monastery being governed by an Abbot, who was entitled to wear

* The *Annals of the Four Masters*, (ann. 592,) say, that, next to St. Patrick, he was the chief instrument of establishing the Gospel in almost all Ireland.

a Mitre, and owed spiritual obedience to no one. This sect had a particular love for retirement, and for that reason chiefly chose islands to live in: perhaps they preferred them, because that, in those times, the Religion of Christ was grievously persecuted by the Roman Emperor Dioclesian, and by other enemies; and, in an island, his disciples were likely to remain more secure, as well as unnoticed. It was for this reason that these people loved Ireland, which was, as you will see by looking at the map, quite in a corner of the then known world; and their love of retirement made them chuse, even in Ireland, secluded spots for their establishments. And this accounts for the great number of holy places that are to be found in very retired places, and in islands, in our country; for example, Glendalough, in the midst of the Wicklow mountains; the Island of Raghery, the Island of St. Patrick's Purgatory, in Loughderg; and those of Devenish, in Lough Erne, of Innisfallen, in the Lake of Killarney, and of Scattery, in the River Shannon. It is remarkable of three of these places, that there are seven churches in each of them, as well as in Clonmacnoise, the most ancient of the Bishoprics, now united in that of Meath; and I believe that this number seven was chosen, in an humble imitation, and remembrance, of the seven primitive churches mentioned in the Revelations; which book was written by the great Apostle of the early Saints of Ireland, St. John.

But to return to the Culdees, and their Abbots; these persons, we are told by St. Bede, (see also Ayliffe's *Parergon*, p. 12.) although they were only Priests, had an authority even over Archbishops in their own districts. St. Columbkille was the greatest of their Abbots; and it is rather an extraordinary thing too, that he should be claimed by the Roman Catholics as a holy man of the Church of St. Peter, when, in truth, he was not only, as I shall shew to you, independent of the Pope, or of any Bishops, but the actual founder of the Presbyterian Religion in Scotland.

Now, my friends, he could not well answer to both of these characters, because this religion allows not of Bishops, and the Roman Catholic derives all authority from them. But, for the purpose of shewing to you the great mistake that is made upon those points, I will tell you how he came to found the Religion of the Presbyterians; all of which you will find written in the account of his life by Ionas, and also by Adamnanus, who succeeded him as Abbot, and in the works of other persons, in the places referred to in the note.*

* See his *Life* by Smith; also Colgan's *Trias Thaumaturga*—Cave, Dupin, &c.

St. Columbkil, having established many religious houses of his sect of the Culdees, at the Island of Raghery, and elsewhere, throughout Ireland, went to an island, (still being fond of islands,) which is upon the coast of Scotland, called Iona, and Icolmkill, corrupted from Hy-Columbkil. He there founded a Monastery, over which he presided, being only, as I have before said, in Priest's orders, or a Presbyter, which is the Latin for Priest. Here he became so famous for his sanctity and learning, having converted numbers of the natives to the profession of Christianity, that the Island Iona became sacred for ever afterwards; and the celebrated Dr. Johnson, who went through a great deal of trouble to visit the place, for it is extremely difficult of access, expresses in very animated terms his feelings,* upon seeing a spot so renowned, describing it as "that illustrious island, which was once the luminary of the Caledonian regions, whence savage clans, and roving barbarians, received the benefit of knowledge and the blessings of religion." This, especially when his jealousy to Scotland is considered, is a strong evidence of conviction in this great man's mind, and proves that there is neither wild enthusiasm, or fable, in the matters which I here detail.

In fine, St. Columbkil was the first great preacher of the Christian religion in that part of Scotland, as you will find from abundant authorities brought together in his Life by Smith; and Fordun says, in his *Scotichronicon*,† that the Scots had, as teachers of the Faith, and administrators of the Sacraments, only Presbyters; following the custom of the primitive Church. In some few years, emissaries from Rome went into the country: in the year 707, the Abbot of Iona became apostate, with many others, from the antient faith; and the Roman Catholic Religion was very generally received. However, there always remained in the country a strong party attached to the first religion of St. Columbkil. After very many struggles, with which we have no particular business here, that party at length prevailed, expelled the Church of Rome, and the Presbyterian Religion became that of all the country. It was called Presbyterian, from being under the direction of Priests, or Presbyters, alone, having no Bishops among them. Let me here ask you, is it not strange, my dear fellow countrymen, if all this be true, as it most unquestionably is—let me ask you, I say, with what face can the Roman Catholics say, in Scotland, in just the same way as they do here, that their Religion is the oldest in that coun-

* Tour to the Hebrides.

† Lib. iii. c. 18.—and Jamieson's Hist. of the Culdees, p. 97.

try? and, if it be true, that the first preachers from the Church of Rome found Christianity existing in Scotland, it is equally true that they found it here; for this sect of Culdees had brought their opinions to the Islands of Scotland from Ireland, where they had been held for a long time in some parts; and where, in the North, East, West, and South of the Island, they gave rise to many religious establishments, some of which were found ready formed by St. Patrick:

Interesting as this subject is, in every point of view; I must quit it, to return to the proofs that Christianity was preached, and received in Ireland, before the arrival of St. Patrick.

In speaking of St. Patrick I should wish to observe, by the way, that I might perhaps be justified, as I have the authority of some learned men upon the subject, to doubt, or at once to deny, that there ever existed such a man—who, being sent hither in the fifth century by the See of Rome, was a considerable means of making Christianity to become the Universal Religion of the land. But, in truth, I do not urge this point; and that for two reasons: the first is, that I would be very sorry to put the testimony of St. Patrick out of the way, or to throw any doubt upon his having been the preacher of such doctrines as I shall hereafter present to you; and secondly, because I think the proofs of his existence, as an eminent person in the hands of Providence here, are sufficient fully to satisfy any reasonable man. They were, in fact, sufficient to satisfy all the wisest of our early antiquarians, and where such men as Archbishops Usher, and Nicholson, Sir James Ware, Harris, O'Flaherty, and others, had no doubt, I should think it presumptuous in me to entertain one. It would be enough to prove that there existed such a person, who came hither on such a mission, to say, that he is mentioned as such by writers who flourished within two hundred years after his death; such as Cummiānus, or Cummineus junior;* by the author of the Life of St. Getrude, A.D. 658; and in a hymn attributed to St. Fiech of Sletty, which is supposed to have been written A.D. 520, and was among the MSS. of Sir Rob. Cotton. Were we to add to this, innumerable traditions of immense antiquity which are to be found respecting him throughout our island, his patronage given not only to the See of Armagh, but to several places of the most remote existence, such as the Cathedral of Dublin, &c., and the uniform mention of him, as the chief Apostle of Ireland, by all historians, one would think enough was said to establish, at the least, that there was once a great Bishop of that name in the land; and, by the way, the evidence of tradition upon this subject is remarkably strong, because it

* In Epist. ad Segienum, A.D. 634; Usher's Sylloge; and O'Conor's *Rer. Hibern. Scrip. i. Proleg. lxxviii.*, and *xc.*, &c.

should be considered, not as being handed down through thirteen hundred years, but considerably fewer; as the records and histories of Armagh, Dublin, and other places, commencing within a short period of his existence, demonstrate, by a much stronger evidence than that of tradition, what was the popular opinion, or the opinion of tradition, at that very remote period of time, when the keeping of record commenced. It is certainly very true that many surprising falsehoods have been invented about St. Patrick, and that they are very commonly believed; and so, my friends, there have been of St. Peter, and of every saint in the Kalendar, from him down to the very last; but yet this does not make it at all doubtful that these persons have existed. It has been the fashion to fabricate lies, not merely about saints, but even of poets and kings; yet we do not, for that reason, discredit their existence. The poet Virgil, for instance, was feigned, in the days when they believed in magic, to have been a most astonishing magician; the wonders he did with his wand put St. Patrick quite into the back ground: and, again, both the English King Alfred, and the great Emperor Charlemagne, have been made to do such surprising things, by the writers of romances, as sometimes surpass even those of Virgil himself. We must not therefore so readily believe that, because St. Patrick is belied, he never existed as the great Apostle of the land.*

The existence of the ancient book of St. Patrick's canons in Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, is another fact, to prove the truth of tradition respecting St. Patrick in general. An account and a facsimile thereof may be seen in O'Connor's *Rer. Hib. Scriptores*, Epis. Nunc. c. cxxxvi. We will therefore take it for granted, that St. Patrick was sent over here, in or about the year 430. Let us now try to find out, for what purpose? and how, he was received. There can be very little

* It is contended that, had St. Patrick been so remarkable a man, as he was said to have been, he would not have been so slightly noticed in the catalogue of Bede (*Ledw.* 366.); but, as Bede wrote a separate life of the Irish Saint, this may account for his slight notice of him elsewhere. To get rid of this argument, we are told that this life by Bede is spurious; and perhaps it is so. There is, however, this fallacy in the reasoning of Dr. Ledwich, where he says, that, had St. Patrick converted the Irish nation, the historian would have mentioned the fact. Be it so—but it does not follow that, because Bede does not speak of St. Patrick, as of him who first converted this nation to Christianity, that there was no great personage of his name—although it indeed may follow, that, agreeably with the entire of my argument, St. Patrick did not convert the natives, but that he found Christianity already existing in the land, on his arrival here. This, indeed, the historian elsewhere gives us ample authority to assert; and, knowing this to be the fact, he necessarily omitted that circumstance, in his notice of the Saint, on which modern ignorance most particularly dwells.

doubt but that St. Patrick was deputed, to preach the Religion of Christianity in Ireland, by the zeal of the Bishops of Rome, who, at this period, were making rapid advances to the height of power which they afterwards possessed; precisely as Palladius was commissioned to go into Scotland, at much the same time, "to the people believing in Christ, but not rightly," according to what the See of Rome thought to be the right faith.* It is clear that St. Patrick found the Christian Religion in Ireland; he declares it in his works,† where he says, that he had gone farther than any Christians had pervaded before; which may be readily allowed indeed, if we give any credit to the unparalleled success of his mission.

Nennius, a British historian, who wrote his history in the year 858, informs us, that St. Patrick ordained three thousand Priests, and made three hundred and sixty-five Bishops; this account must certainly be considered as being very exaggerated, even after we have made allowance for the greater simplicity, and more confined extent of jurisdiction, of the Bishops of ancient days.‡ It appears, however, certain, from this, and from other accounts of history, that St. Patrick was well received in the land, and was exceedingly prosperous in his ministry. This very great success may well be allowed to be a proof, in itself, that the island was already prepared to receive and attend to him, by the existence of Christianity therein before he arrived. His success is, as I said, acknowledged; and Mr. Laing, the sensible writer of the history of Scotland, supposes from it, (vol. ii. p. 30.) that there were no Druids ever in Ireland, for otherwise they must have given a formidable resistance. I am surprised that

* Prosperi Chron. ann. 429; to which Bede and other authors agree.

† Opusc. p. 20. "ubique pergebam causâ vestrâ, etiam usque ad exteras partes, ubi nunquam aliquis perveneret qui baptizaret," &c. This plainly insinuates that he had found Christianity already existing in some places.

‡ The inducement to erect churches in the first ages of Christianity in Great Britain was considerable; "so that," as Mr. Ledwich observes, in his account of the parish of Aghaboe, "an excellent Judge, (Archbishop Nicholson,) of such matters remarks, that the number of ecclesiastics in Ireland, at "one time, was nearly equal to that of all its other inhabitants." This may be overcharged; but it is certain, that, as Dr. Ledwich remarks in the same work, "each toparch had his Bishop;" and if we, therefore, look into the antiquarian history of the Diocese of Meath alone, we shall find it to be an union of several Sees, which were once independent of each other. By a canon of a General Council, holden by Paparo, at Kells, A.D. 1152, the village Bishoprics of that Diocese were converted into rural Deaneries; and this was adopted, and enforced, by a Synod holden A.D. 1216, by Simon, Bishop of Meath. By this Athenry, Clonard, Kells, Slane, Screen, and Dunshaghlin, became rural Deaneries, from village Bishoprics. Clonmacnoise was added by Act of Parliament of Queen Elizabeth's reign.

this observing historian did not here perceive, that, if St. Patrick was so favourably received, it was because Christianity was already known in the country. It is true there were no Druids in Ireland at the time of his arrival, but that does not prove that there never were; indeed, there are abundant remains* of them still existing every where throughout the island. Mr. Laing should have recollected, that the opposition of any heathen priesthood would have been as great, probably, as that of the Druids; and, therefore, the quiet progress of St. Patrick, and his great success, fully shew, that Heathenism was already in general abolished; but does not at all afford the inference, that Druidism never existed in Ireland.

It may here, perhaps, be said, that the success of St. Patrick makes against the entire foundation of my argument, thus—as he was an emissary from Rome, he preached its doctrines; and the general acquiescence in these doctrines proved, that there was no pre-existing system of Christian teaching in Ireland materially differing from what he preached; or, according to what has always been the case in all ages, he would have met with great opposition. Now, I allow that innovation in religious matters never ceases to create a great feeling of opposition, wherever it is attempted to be introduced: I might also safely say, that we have no reason to conjecture that there was no such opposition, for we have scarcely any authentic account of the transactions. But I waive all further contest upon the matter, and will suppose the preaching of St. Patrick to have been popular in Ireland; I will allow also that he preached the then received opinions of the See of Rome; but the great, the important truth, my dear fellow countrymen, is this, that neither the See of Rome, nor St. Patrick, nor the native Christians of Ireland, preached, or taught, or thought, as the Clergy of the See of Rome do now; his reception here was far more cordial, and his success here much greater, than that which St. Austin met with in England, above an hundred years afterwards, and this because he came from Rome at an earlier period of time than St. Austin did; and Rome, the fountain head, was not then so corrupted in doctrine as it was when the latter came to England; of course, the doctrines of St. Patrick were purer, and, therefore, were less in opposition to those of the old religion, which had been preached by the first Christians in Ireland. In truth, the firmness with which the Irish, in after ages, adhered to their ancient mode of calcu-

* For example, there are two remarkable Druidical altars so near to Dublin as Loughlinstown.

lating the time of Easter, and other points of mere discipline, proved, that they would not have tamely acquiesced, had St. Patrick attempted much of serious innovation in their religion.

But, after all, can it admit of any doubt, that Christianity must have been preached in Ireland, long, very long, before the arrival there of St. Patrick, if it be certain, as it has been most clearly proved, that it was introduced into England before a hundred years had passed away, from the time of the crucifixion of our blessed Lord.

I do not intend to take up your time with telling you of several conjectures, which different learned writers have formed, about the introduction of Christianity into England, and which will be found amply detailed in Usher's *Brit. Eccl. Antiq.*, Parker de *Antiq. Brit. Eccl. Hist.*, Fuller's *Church History*, and other works; but shall only remark, that they might all be true, because, as different societies send out different missionaries in these days, to one and the same place, so it might have been with England, in the days when she was a Heathen country, that several different attempts were made to spread the Gospel there. Now, my friends, one thing is remarkable, to add to the probability that Ireland was converted before St. Patrick came thither, which is, that, during the time when the Christians were grievously persecuted throughout the world, it was much more than probable that some of them would take refuge in a place so out of the reach of persecution as Ireland was; especially as it was to be seen from the coast of Great Britain, looking very safe and very inviting. And, again, when we remember how zealous true Christians then were, and always have been, and still are, to spread the knowledge of the Gospel all over the world, is it at all likely that they would not attempt Ireland from England, until so late as the period of St. Patrick, who did not live until three hundred years after England had been converted to the Christian faith? Now, putting all this together, we shall find it very difficult to believe, that Ireland was, for such a length of time, a Heathen land, and yet only eighteen miles from a Christian one.

Eumenius, a writer who lived about the year 300, tells us,* that the Irish frequently visited, nay invaded England, in the time of Julius Cæsar, and our annals make frequent mention of such incursions, which are also acknowledged by many writers:† this proves an intercourse to have existed between the two nations, which it would be absurd to suppose was neglected alto-

* O'Con. *Rer. Hib. Scrip. Epis. Nunc. lxx.*

† See Buchanan, Gildas, and others enumerated in *Hib. Rer. Scrip. Prol. i. xxxiv., lxxxviii., &c., and ii. cviii., &c.*

gether by the English Christians. Therefore, it now becomes important for us to ascertain, whether or not Christianity was preached in Great Britain, in the first, or second centuries; for I think common sense will admit, that it could not have taken fifty, or an hundred, much less three hundred years, to travel on to Ireland. Such a supposition would be altogether against the spirit of primitive Christianity, and the zeal of its disciples.

It is acknowledged by every writer* who has treated of the subject of English history, that Christianity was first known in England, at the latest, one hundred and fifty years after Christ. It is related by historians, that Lucius,† Monarch of Britain, the third in descent from Caractacus, publicly embraced the Christian faith, in the year 176, although he did not impose it on his subjects; and there is extant a letter from Pope Eleutherius to this Prince. Speaking of the second century, Tertullian,‡ who wrote in the year 201, says, that the parts of Britain which were inaccessible to the Romans were yet subjected to Christ. Spotiswood, in his history of the Church of Scotland, quoting Boethius, Buchanan, and Lesly, says, that the Scottish King Donald embraced Christianity in the year 203, and that it was generally established, by expelling the Druids, by King Crotalinth, so early as 277: he thinks that, when the persecutions of Domitian drove St. John, the Apostle, to the Island of Patmos, some of his disciples took refuge in the British Isles; and that the subsequent persecution of Dioclesian furthered the progress of conversion. And Gildas informs us, that the Christian Religion was at first received but coldly by the natives, until this persecution put many persons to death—this was about the year 303. The general establishment of Christianity in Britain took place in the reign of Constantine§ the Great; he was a Briton born, and the son of Helena, an English woman; and he was in England when he was proclaimed Emperor by the army. Accordingly we find three British Bishops,|| with a British Priest, and Deacon, attending the Council of Arles, in the year 314; and others at those of Nice, A.D. 325, of Sardica, A.D. 347, and Ariminum, A.D. 359.

It will not surely be uninteresting here to mention to you

* The Bishop of St. David's quotes Tertullian, Origen, Athanasius, Chrysostom, and Arnobius, to prove that "the Gospel was preached in Britain in the earliest times." (See Protestant Retrospect, p. 8.)

† Tyrrel says, his coins bore on one side a cross. See Davis Rep. Præm. case, p. 244, &c.

‡ Adv. Judæos, c. 7.

§ His father Constantius lived many years in Britain, and died at York.

|| O'Con. Rer. Hib. Scrip Prol. i. cxxix, and ii. cvii, &c. and authorities there.

some arguments, which make it appear exceedingly probable, that the great Apostle St. Paul himself visited Great Britain in his travels, and even likely that he preached the Gospel also in Ireland.

These are the following authorities* for the fact, that Christianity was preached in England by some one of the Apostles : St. Irenæus, one of the Fathers, who lived in the second century, (lib. i. c. 2, 3.) speaks of churches established by them among the Celtic nations; and Eusebius, a very learned Father, who lived about the year 326, (lib. iii. c. 7.) directly asserts, that some of the Apostles crossed the Ocean to the islands called British. Thus also Theodoret of the fifth century, (in Ps. 116.) and Nicephorus, (who was of a later age, and, I allow, of lesser authority,) repeats the same assertion in his history. So far of the testimony of the Fathers; to which I will add that of Gildas, the most ancient of the native British historians, who flourished in the sixth century; he says that Christianity was introduced into England before the defeat of Boadicea, Queen of the Iceni, which took place in the year 61.

Now with respect to the individual Apostle, or person, that so preached; the following facts respecting St. Paul are very remarkable indeed. St. Clemens, who was surnamed Romanus,† who is esteemed to have been the third Pope after St. Peter, who wrote the ancient epistles to the Corinthians, which are well known to scholars in divinity, and who is mentioned, by St. Paul, in his Epistles to the Philippians, ch. iv. v. 3. informs us, that this Apostle went to the "utmost bounds of the West;" while St. Jerome, the great translator of the Bible into Latin, a version which is nearly that which is now used in the Roman Catholic Church, and St. Athanasius, both of them Fathers of the fourth century, assert, that he preached in Spain, and in the West;‡ and that, when released from imprisonment in Rome, he went from Ocean to Ocean, and to the islands that lie in the Ocean. I shall observe here, by the way, that Britain was generally known in Rome by the name of the utmost Island of the West; it is so called by Catullus the Poet, and Theodoret, whom I have mentioned before, calls it the utmost part of the West. These assertions of the very early Fathers are brought yet closer to the point by Nicephorus, an ecclesiastical historian of the fourteenth century, (lib. i. c. 1.) who asserts, that St.

* The Bishop of St. David's quotes Athanasius, Cyril, Epiphanius, Jerome, Chrysostom, Theodoret, and Gregorius M., to prove this; and Catullus, Eusebius, Jerome, Arnobius, Theodoret, and Nicephorus, to prove Britain, or her Isles, to have been the boundary of the Gospel to the West. (See Protestant Retrospect, p. 8.)

† Bower's Lives of the Popes, vol. i. p. 14, &c.

‡ Com. in Amos, c. 5.

Paul brought salvation to the islands that lie in the Ocean, and British Isles, and utmost bounds of the West. Venantius* Fortunatus, A.D. 580, repeats the same; and "Sophronius,† "Pater Hierosolymitanus, disertis verbis asserit, Britanniam "eum," (Paulum nempé,) "invisisse;" "Sophronius of Jerusalem expressly asserts, that Paul visited Britain."

Let us now look to other evidences of the truth of this fact, some of them connected with the events related in the Scriptures themselves.

Upon the reduction of England by the Romans, in the reign of Caractacus, A.D. 51, the father of this Prince was sent as an hostage to Rome;‡ he remained there seven years, and returned home in the year 58. During his captivity at Rome he must have heard of St. Paul, who was in that city just at that period; and indeed must have certainly known him, if it be true, as is asserted upon very credible authority, that he returned to Britain a Christian. Nor was he the only British convert of the Apostle; Pudens, at whose house the first § Christians used to meet for worship, and Claudia, whom St. Paul mentions in 2 Tim. ii. 21., are supposed to have been a Roman Senator, and his wife Claudia Rufina, a British Lady, who was celebrated by the Poet Martial, for her beauty, in two of his Epigrams (54th of lib. xi. and 13th of lib. iv.) She was, as we are informed by St. Clemens|| himself, mother to Linus, the first Gentile Bishop of Rome, who is mentioned, with her, in St. Paul's second epistle to Tim. chap. iv. verse 21. And it is a fact sufficiently interesting to observe on, by the way, that the first Bishop of Rome, and the immediate successor of St. Peter, (if indeed he was ever Bishop of that city,) was of British extraction; and, not only so, but converted to Christianity by St. Paul. Now¶ we know the character of Christianity; we have witnessed the generous, the holy zeal, with which the females of our country have of late years exerted themselves, as the servants of their Anointed Master, in promoting the knowledge of his Gospel. It will, therefore, appear quite natural to suppose, that Claudia would urge the Apostle to seize the opportunity which the return of the Bri-

* lib. 3. de vitâ Martini.

† Godwin de Præsul. ed. 1616. p. 8.

‡ See a charge of the Bishop of St. David's to his Clergy; and Henry's Hist. of England, B. I. C. 2. §. 2.

§ Spondan. An. 44. No. 8.

|| If St. Clement be the author of the Constit. Apostol. See them in lib. vii. c. 47.; and see Bower's Life of Linus, among those of the Popes, Vol. i. p. 46.

¶ It is pleasing to remark, that we have early testimonies of the conversion of British ladies to Christianity, such as that of Pomponia Græcina, the wife of Plautius, a Lieutenant of the Emperor Claudius. See Tacitus, lib. xiii. c. 32. and Brotier.

fish Prince, in the year 58, so admirably afforded to preach the Gospel, in obedience to the commission he had received, to the extremes of the Gentile world. "Depart, for I will send thee *far hence* unto the Gentiles." (Acts xxii. 21.) "I have set thee to be a light to the Gentiles, that thou shouldst be for salvation unto the ends of the earth." (Acts xiii. 47.)

Eusebius* makes the arrival of St. Paul at Rome, upon his appeal to Cæsar, to have been A.D. 56; and St. Luke says, (Acts xxviii. 30.) that he dwelt there "two whole years:" this, I think, clearly implies, that he quitted that city in the year 58, the very year upon which the British Prince returned to his native island. We hear no more of St. Paul in the book of the Acts; but we can scarcely be at a loss to conjecture how that zealous Minister employed the remainder of his life; he who, constrained as he was "by the love of Christ" in the former part of it, encountered every possible danger, "of perils of waters, and perils of robbers; by the heathen, in the wilderness, in the sea;" and suffered repeated shipwrecks; we are not at a loss, I say, to discover, that preaching "*far hence* among the Gentiles," that is, at a very great distance from the Holy Land, formed the continual occupation of his long and laborious ministry.

Two things appear to me to follow from what has been said; the one, which seems to be quite proved, is, that St. Paul preached in England; the other, which is most probable is, that he also preached the Gospel in Ireland.

It may be useful shortly to recapitulate, with reference to both these points. As to the first—The Fathers of the Church are our undoubted authorities that the Britons were converted by an Apostle, and the first English historian says, that they were Christians before the death of St. Paul. Other fathers tell us, that this ardent Minister brought the Gospel to the Isles of the West; and others expressly assert, that he planted it in Britain. The commission of St. Paul, and the certainty of his obeying that commission, by the undertaking of frequent journeyings and voyages; must compel us to admit, that, so far from omitting an opportunity so favourable as the return of the father of Caractacus afforded, he would strain every nerve to go among nations polluted by a Paganism which was one of the darkest and the most sanguinary that has ever disgraced human nature. What was all the idolatry of Rome and Greece, compared to the immolations of numbers of infants, at one sacrifice, to Woden? The British females could not but deeply con-

* See this confirmed by several other authorities, both of the most ancient and also modern, as quoted by the Bishop of St. David's. Protestant Retrospect, p. 8.

trast those horrors with the glorious liberty of Christ, and could not fail to represent them, to St. Paul, in all their horrible atrocity. We now lose sight of him, at the precise period of the returning homewards of the British Prince; and hear no more of him in the sacred book: but the first writer (Clemens Romanus) that follows it conveys him to the utmost bounds of the West; and there we find him preaching, when we look into the records of subsequent historians. The other point is the probability of his preaching in Ireland. I would urge here the great force of the word *utmost*, which is that which is used by all the writers who have mentioned the extreme extent of the visits of St. Paul to the West. Let us then take up the map, and say, to what part of the then known world does this peculiarly strong, and often repeated, epithet apply, if not to Ireland? Ireland was known to the Romans, by the report of others; for Cæsar speaks of its dimensions.* Again, St. Paul preached the Gospel "in the *Islands*," (plural;) "that lie in the Ocean;" and, yet more particularly, "in the British *Isles*," a name applied, by Cæsar and others, jointly to Great Britain and Ireland. And, indeed, when the love of Christ had constrained him to make a voyage so long, and so dangerous, as that to Britain certainly was, in those days of imperfect navigation; his ardour must have cooled, by the influence of a northern atmosphere, if he neglected to cross the narrow strait of St. George's Channel, which, in one place, is but 18 miles in breadth.

It is a remarkable circumstance, to be particularly noted in this case, that any improbability arising from the distance of Ireland from the Holy Land, not only vanishes, as applied to St. Paul; but operates, with full force, the other way; because, as his commission was to preach salvation "*far hence*," that is, far from the Holy Land, and "unto the *ends*" "of the earth," the more distant his journey was, and the more it was stretched into the ends of the known world, so much the more strictly he obeyed the command. It is, therefore, far more probable that he preached the Gospel in Ireland; the utmost bounds of the West, as it was then known; the "*Ultima Thule*," perhaps, of the Romans; and, certainly, one of the "*ends*" of the ancient world; than in any place nearer to Palestine, and concerning which we have no authentic account of its having been the scene of his ministry.

The obvious and direct object of all this enumeration and reasoning is, to shew that it affords a probability, almost amounting to certainty, that Christianity had passed over to

* De bello Gallico, Lib. v. c. 13.

Ireland, long, very long, before the mission of St. Patrick thither; for full 280 years elapsed between the time when we find it certainly received into England, and the year when St. Patrick landed in this Island. No reason at all consistent with common sense can be given why, when an intercourse between the nations doubtless existed, such an innovation as the Christian religion should not have been communicated from one to the other. People generally converse on that subject which interests them most; and what could be so momentous as this new view of Religion—one incomprehensibly beyond the attainment of natural reason to acquire? That it was highly interesting, is at once proved by this historical fact, that it drove the bloody though fascinating mysteries of Druidism into the holes and corners of the sister Island. But, it will perhaps be said, the people were too busy with war in England to send out missionaries elsewhere. Tertullian, however, tells us, that the places which were inaccessible to the Romans, were visited by the Religion of Christ; so we find that, although she was borne at first upon the eagle's wing, the dove soared afterwards to heights beyond the reach of the Roman bird. Again, it will be said, that persecution was, in the early ages of Christianity, too busy to allow of such undisturbed leisure as might assist in the promotion of missionary schemes: but this worked quite the other way; it had already pleased God that the first great persecution of the Church of Christ should have been converted, by his all-disposing providence, to promote the circulation of the Religion of his Son—"But Saul made havock of the church," &c.; "they, therefore, that were dispersed went about preaching the word of God," (Acts viii. 3, 4.); and it pleased him, a second time, that our poor remote Island should be indebted to the severe persecutions of the second and third ages of the same Church, for the reception of that blessed word. This, then, was the time, when the good seed was sown; and, I trust, not all in unprofitable ground—this was the time when the land received, upon its bosom, a profuse scattering of the precious wheat—the enemy had not yet come to sow the tares.

This leads me to the consideration of the second part of my subject, to wit, what was the character of that Christian doctrine, which, as we have demonstrated, was preached in this country before the arrival of St. Patrick, and probably much earlier; and what was its nature at the time of the preaching here of St. Patrick, the first messenger to this Island from Rome, (an event that took place in the year of our Lord 430,) and during the succeeding early ages of time.

CHAPTER II.

OF THE AUTHORITY OF THE POPE, AND OF THE CHURCH.

I SHALL commence with a very important circumstance, in which, indeed, it cannot be expected that St. Patrick, being a missionary of the See of Rome, should so entirely agree with St. Columbkil, and the other ancient saints of the country, as he did in other points of doctrine—I mean subordination to the Pope, and the Roman Church. I shall, therefore, treat of it first; and shew also, from St. Patrick's opinion upon the point, that the authority of the Pope, in his time, was very different indeed from what it is now.

It has already been hinted to you, that the first Christians of Ireland paid very little regard to the authority of the Pope; in truth, they went on their own way, quite independent of him; and not only did not ask his advice in any matters, but, whenever he took upon him to interfere, they directly gave him to understand, that they owed him no obedience on account of the situation he was beginning to assume—of Head of the Church. As for infallibility, it was not, at that time, thought of, as will hereafter appear; and the very uncharitable doctrine, that there is no salvation out the Church of Rome, was also not as yet dreamed of; nor was that Church then called, nor was it thought to be, exclusively Catholic, or universal.

In the early ages of the Church the Pope was very far, indeed, from assuming the great authority which he afterwards did. The famous Pope Gregory the Great declares, “that he himself was the Emperor's servant; and owed him obedience;” and “that God had given the Emperor power over Priests, as well as others:” * and the French people have, therefore, at all times resisted the Pope's claims, as well of supremacy, as of infallibility; with respect to the first, they declare, that “the King, assisted by his Council, and not the Pope, is the Head of the Church in his kingdom.” † And, with regard to the second, those who took degrees in their universities were compelled, solemnly, to deny it. Æneas Sylvius, who was one of the Popes, confessed, that “there was little respect paid to Rome before the Nicene Council;” and, in fine, when the Bishop of Constantinople would assume the title of Universal Bishop, Pope Gregory writes of him, saying, that “he wonders at the arrogance of assuming this new title, which none of the Bishops of Rome had ever accepted

* Ad Maurit. Lib. iii.; Epist. 62. and ad Theod. Lib. iii.; Epist. 65.

† Claud. Fauchet, Lib de l'Eglise Gallic. p. 234. Boceilius, Lib. 5. de Decret Eccl. Gallic. tit. 20. and Pithæus de Lib. Eccl. Gallic. c. 3. 2, n. 15.

"of; a title blasphemous to Christian ears,"* and such as was symptomatic of the character of Antichrist. The authority of many other Pontiffs might be brought to shew, that the exclusive title of Catholic, or Universal Bishop, which is now assumed by the Roman Catholic See, is an innovation on the primitive Church; in fact, it was not spoken of until the year 528, nor confirmed to the Pope, until the Emperor Phocas conferred it, by an edict in the year 606. Add to all this, that the sixth Council of Carthage, (A.D. 419.) rejected the Pope's claim of appeals; and he was bound by the canons of the Church, and could not alter them—a fact which can be proved by abundance of authority, even by that of several Popes themselves. Popes were sometimes nominated, as other Bishops very frequently were, by Princes;† and were often, and severely, checked, as the histories of France, Germany, England, and other countries inform us, when they attempted to encroach upon the authorities of the several states of Europe; which they did of later days, in a manner equally contrary to the practice of ancient times, and to the simple doctrines of primitive Christianity.

Even St. Austin himself, when he arrived in England, as an emissary from Rome, claimed the subordination of the church there, to the Pope, as the head of the *Western Church*, and not as the Supreme Bishop of the Earth;‡ and this brings me to consider, how the Pope was thought of in these Islands, when St. Austin and St. Patrick arrived.

The first Christians in Ireland did not look up to the Pope, or to any other foreign person, as their spiritual head. We have already seen this to be so in the case of the Culdees, and even the authority of Archbishops of the country was disallowed within the district of their Abbot's jurisdiction; but, as the greater part of Ireland was governed by Bishops in spiritual matters, it will be more material to shew what was the case, where they were concerned.§

It may surprise some of you, my dear fellow countrymen, who have heard such an uproar about giving the King of England the Veto, in the appointment of Roman Catholic Bishops, to know, that it was not until above 600 years after St. Patrick first landed in Ireland, that the Bishop of Rome, as Pope, took upon him to interfere in their appointment in Ireland. The Irish Bishops were in general elected by the rest of the Clergy,

* See Bower's *Life of Gregory I.*; and his letters, &c., as there quoted.

† See Father Paul, and Columb. ad Hib. on the mode of electing Bishops; and their authorities, *passim*.

‡ Bede Hist. and Jamieson's Hist. of the Culdees, p. 77.

§ We shall find, hereafter, that St. Columbkil, and some of his successors in the Abbey of Iona, were declared, and acted, as Primates of Ireland; and that St. Adamnan presided in a Synod as such.

with the approbation of the Irish Chieftains, no more being required in their appointment, until the reign of Henry II., King of England; and the See of Armagh itself, so far from being conferred by the Pope, so far from any interference existing on the part of that Pontiff, in early times, was for nearly 300 years kept in the possession of one family, who contrived that it should descend in several instances from father to son; disregarding alike the right of election, which the Clergy possessed, and the desires of the Head of the Roman Catholic Church.*

With respect to the Prelates of Dublin, this See, as well as those of Waterford and Limerick, was erected by the Danes. If we take up the ancient Letters of the Irish, which are published in Usher's Sylloge, we shall find abundant matter to shew, that the Bishops of those Sees disclaimed all dependence on that of Armagh, and professed obedience immediately to Canterbury—perhaps because the connection between Norway and this Island was done away. See this publicly declared in documents of the years 1074, 1085, 1095, 1096, 1122, and 1140 (pages 118, &c. and 165.) The 25th letter was one sent with a person who had been elected in Dublin, to be Bishop, requesting the Archbishop of Canterbury to consecrate him, according to custom; a custom acknowledged in letters 27 and 28, which were written A.D. 1081, by the Archbishop in reply. In the 40th, written A.D. 1122, the people of Dublin write to Ralph, the Prelate of Canterbury, and complain of the Bishops of Ireland, especially him of Armagh, being angry with them, because they "would not obey their ordination, but always desired to be under his dominion." In the 39th letter, Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury, A.D. 1110, writes to the Bishop of Dublin, desiring him not to carry his cross before him, because that is the exclusive privilege of Archbishops, who have received a pall from Rome. The Prelates of Dublin were then only Bishops; and Gregory, who died in the year 1161, was the first Archbishop of that city.

But, indeed, the other Bishoprics, which were erected by natives, were equally independent of Rome; their Bishops were elected, as I have said before, by the Clergy, and were consecrated by each other. Giraldus Cambrensis, who accompanied Henry II. to this country, informs us,† "There were no Archbishops in Ireland, but the Bishops only did consecrate each other; until John Papyrio, the Pope's Legate, came thither, not many years back." (A.D. 1152.) He brought four palls, the vestment of an Archbishop, into Ire-

* Harris's Ware, p. 54.; and O'Connor, p. 9. † Topog. distinct. iii. c. 17,

land: the same is said in Pembridge's Annals of Ireland, (a Camden edit.); speaking of Gelasius, an Irish Primate, in the twelfth century, he says, "He is *first* said to be Archbishop, because he first used the pall; others before him were only called Archbishops and Primates by name, in reverence and "honour of St. Patrick." Bernard, in his life of St. Malachy, says, accordingly, that the Metropolitan See of Armagh always wanted a pall. Finally, St. Patrick, in his Epistle to Coroticus, and at the commencement of his Canons, calls himself, simply, *Bishop*. With respect to the election of Bishops by the Clergy, the very Pope Celestine I., who sent St. Patrick to Ireland, ordains, in his Epistles to the Bishops of Vienna and Narbonne, that the ancient mode of election should be adhered to. (Columb. ad Hib. p. 30 and 72, and authorities there.) This writer shews, (p. 81.) that the Irish Annals expressly declare, that the Irish Clergy always elected and consecrated their own Bishops, without the Pope's knowledge; This continued until the arrival of Paparo, in the year 1152. And thus also it was in Scotland and in Man; in the former of these places, the year 904 was the first time that a Bishop of St. Andrews went for consecration to Rome;* and those of Man were elected by the Clergy, and sent, when the Danes possessed Armagh, to be consecrated there, and afterwards to the Metropolitan of Norway.† And, indeed, to bring the point yet higher, thus it was with the Pope himself. We know how he is elected still; and history will inform us, that originally all orders of the Clergy voted individually at the election, and this so late as the twelfth century. The suffrage of the delegates of the people was also required.‡

We see now, my friends, in what way this great point of church discipline—the appointment of Bishops—was conducted in Ireland: let us take a very short survey of Religion in Great Britain, in the early ages; that we may see of what nature the authority of the Pope, or of his church, and the interference of either, was at that time. And, first, let us hear how the Bishop of Rome addresses the first English Christian King, Lucius, about the year 170; in that age of humility, which long preceded the time when the Roman Pontiff called himself God's Vicar upon Earth. "You have lately, by Divine mercy, received the law, and faith of Christ; you have with you in the kingdom both the New and Old Testament, whence, by the advice of your Peers, and the Council of your kingdom, you may select holy and blameless laws;

* Henry's Hist. of England, ii. 179. Dublin edit. 1789, and Boethius.

† Columb. 3d letter on Liberties of Irish Church, p. 44.

‡ Columb. ad Hib. 38, on the mode of appointing Bishops in Ireland, from Baronius; and Father Paul.

" which may be enacted and supported, not by any foreign, but by your own authority, who are God's Vicar in your own kingdom, and represent his power to your people." This total independence in the British nation continued for several years: we find, before the year 400, Pelagius, the great author of the Pelagian heresy, and by birth a Briton, refusing to appear before the Pope, when cited to go to Rome; alleging that Britain was neither in the Diocese, or Province of the Pontiff. It is not, therefore, surprising that an inveterate resistance should be made to St. Austin, who came to establish a spiritual despotism of the Pope over England: the opposition was long continued, and severe; and the spirit was kept alive by the bards, in such strains as this of Taliessin, the famous British Poet, who flourished at that time:—

" Wo be to that Priest yborne,
 " That will not cleanly weed his cornei
 " And preach his charge among;
 " Wo be to the shepherd, (I say,)
 " That will not watch his fold alway,
 " As to his office doth belong—
 " Wo be to him that doth not keepe
 " From Romish wolves his sheepe,
 " With staffe, and weapon strong.

The original is in the Chronicle of Wales, p. 254.† In fine, even to this day, says St. Bede in the year 731, " it is the manner of the Britons," (the ancient Britons, who at this time were driven into Wales,) " to hold the faith and religion of the English," who had put themselves under St. Austin, " in no account at all; nor to communicate with them in any thing no more than with Pagans." (Bede Eccl. Hist. Lib. iii. c. 20.)

Again, we have a strong proof of the independence of the British on the Romish Church, in the tone with which King Edgar spoke to his Clergy, who were Roman Catholics, even after they were admitted, or had forced themselves into Eng-

* Davies. Rep. Card of Præm. p. 245, refers to this letter.

† It is a matter well worthy of our notice, and both amusing and instructive, to compare this Poem with the Letter of the present Pope Pius VII. to the Clergy of his persuasion in Ireland. *Mutato nomine de te fabula narratur*, says Horace. One might even fancy the Pope to have had the expressions of the Bard in his view. Taliessin denounces against the sowing of tares among the wheat—so does Pope Pius VII. He concludes with rousing the shepherds to the care of their flocks—so does Pope Pius warn them to guard " their flocks from the wolves who come in sheep's clothing." But mark, my friends, the difference; it is at once curious and of vital importance. The Priests whom Taliessin animated against St. Austin, who was sent from Rome, and who at that time was the enemy which sowed the tares, were the ancient Priests of the old Religion of the country, the professors of which old Religion are now-a-days stiled enemies by the Pope.

land, having driven the old Religion to the fastnesses of Wales :
 “ I have Constantine’s sword in my hands, and you have Peter’s in your’s ; let us join right hands, and combine sword with sword, that we may put the lepers without the camp, and purify the sanctuary of the Lord :” * meaning, “ We have all the power that is sufficient within ourselves.” And, agreeably with this, the laws of Saint Edward commence with a protestation, asserting the exclusive authority of the King over all his subjects in the church.

It is not my intention, as it would be somewhat foreign to my purpose, to give an account of the gradual increase of encroachments upon the liberties of the English Church, which were made by that of Rome ; and the elastic resistance with which they were checked, and at length, with a wholesome violence, entirely thrown off ; by means of which the constitution of the church recovered its sanity at the Reformation, recoiling against the unnatural pressure, as the constitution of the body frequently does, by the mere strength of nature, against the attacks of fever. The native temper of the English Church was too pure, to be broken by a force which was, however, sufficient to bend it. Although William conquered Britain under a banner consecrated by a Pope, and admitted of his legates and his palls, and gave him money, he refused him fealty and authority, and prevented an appeal to Rome—† although the imprudent murder of the turbulent Becket gave a pretext to the ecclesiastics for sedition, and the dastardly John yielded an abject submission to the Pope, the disgrace lasted but a moment, and, throughout the entire struggle, from the first landing of St. Austin to the Reformation, that Pontiff’s authority was always denied by British Kings, by British Parliaments, by the English people, and, frequently, even by Ecclesiastical Councils—for the English Church rejected with disdain the canons of the second Council of Nice, A.D. 680, respecting images. “ Even when the Pope’s Supremacy was “ most exalted here,” (says Dr. Ayloffe, in his *Parergon*, p. 127,) before a new Bishop, appointed by a Papal Bull, was given the temporalities of his See, “ he was to appear before the King, “ and renounce every thing, in those Bulls, which might be “ prejudicial to the crown, or contrary to our laws.” Of the Scots the Ecclesiastical historian, Mosheim, writes thus :—
 “ The ancient Britons, and Scots, persisted long in the maintenance of their religious liberty, and neither the threats, “ nor the promises of the legates of Rome, could engage them “ to submit to the decrees and authority of the ambitious

* Davies’ Rep. ub. sup. ; Bishop of St. David’s Charge, p. 15. ; and Us. Brit. Ecc. Antiq.

† See Dav. ub. sup.

" Pontiff, as appears manifestly from the testimony of Bede," Spotiswood, the Scottish historian, brings evidence of the same truth;* and relates the wars with the English that followed, in consequence of an attempt to bring in the new faith.

I have already mentioned, that the reason of sending the first Roman Missionary, Palladius, to Scotland, was to set the people right in their Christian faith—" to the Scotch, believing in Christ, but not rightly so, was Palladius sent." In fact, in one ancient and similar opinion, the ancient Britons, the Scotch, and the Irish agreed; and upon these old tenets there was something, more or less, of innovation imposed by the three first great emissaries from Rome; but much more by St. Austin than the rest, and, therefore, he was the worst received of the three. This agreement between these three nations will appear by extracts from a letter of Laurentius, an assistant of St. Austin.† " We know the Britons; we thought " the Scots," (meaning as well the North Britons, as the Irish, who were both called Scots at that day,) " were better than " they; but we learned, by Bishop Dagamus coming into this " Ireland, and Abbot Columbanus coming into France, that " the Scots did differ nothing from the Britons in their conversation." This Dagamus was an Irish Bishop; and Laurentius speaks, in the letter, of the Scots that did inhabit Ireland, as well as of those of Scotland now so called.

To return to Ireland. Although St. Patrick did, in some degree, preach the Supremacy of Rome, (the only innovation of the kind which he did preach,) we must remember that this pretence of Supremacy was very different then from what it afterwards became, in its character and effects, nor was it stiled universal for above 100 years afterwards. In speaking of the Head and foundation of the Church, Sedulius, an Irish Divine of the year 490, asserts, that, by the word, ' foundation,' is meant " Christ;" and, quoting Is. xxviii. 16, says, that " it is certain " by the stone Christ is signified."‡ And Claudius, A.D. 815, expounding Mat. xvi. 18, " Upon this rock will I build my " Church," while he says, that Christ granted unto Peter " a " participation of his own name, that from Petra, (the rock,) " he should be called Peter," he declares, that " other foundation can no man lay besides that which is laid, which is Christ " Jesus;" (in Mat. Lib. ii.) he likewise tells us, " that St. " Paul did not esteem himself inferior to St. Peter, because " both of them were, by one, ordained unto one and the same " ministry;" St. Peter having " had a Primacy given him " over the circumcision," and St. Paul over the Gentiles;§

* Hist. p. 12.

† Bede, Lib. ii. c. 4.

‡ edeb. in. Heb. xi.

§ In Galat. ii.

who, for that very reason, indeed, has the better claim of the two to be Head of the Gentile Churches, as well of Rome, as of all the Western world. In fact, St. Peter was so far from being considered as being the foundation of the Gentile Church, that, not only are St. Paul and St. John, (who, by the way, together with St. James, is called in the Ep. to the Galatians. ii. 9. a pillar of the Church, as well as St. Peter,) but, in a hymn, which was composed to the honour of St. Patrick, by one of your most Catholic Saints, St. Seachlin, (or Secundinus,) about the year 448, our Irish Apostle is praised in these words: "He is constant in the fear of God, and immoveable in the faith; upon him the Church is builded, as on Peter;" and, again, "Christ hath chosen him to be his Vicar on Earth." Were the Pope at that time what he since has been, in the consideration of the Irish, we should not, my friends, have found a person of such holiness and importance as to be sainted after his death, thus dare to assert that St. Patrick was Christ's Vicar; this would be heresy in the estimation of your Clergy now; but then it was the common way of thinking. Accordingly the See of Armagh is called, in 1014, by another Roman Catholic writer, "the Citie Apostolic of this land;"* and even the Bishop of Kildare is called the highest Priest and highest Bishop; names which could not now be applied among you to any city but Rome, or to any person but the Pope, without incurring the danger of excommunication, or heavy fine. The name of Pope itself, in the original Latin, Papa, was a common appellation of Bishops, in the early ages of Christianity; but it is unimportant to us to dwell more upon this point here.† The first Bishop of Armagh who was appointed by Papal provision, was Egan Mac-Gillividir, in the year 1206;‡ and this was only on the opportunity which presented itself of deciding a contested election; and it would scarcely have been attempted, were not the mean spirited John upon the throne at that time; and even that cowardly Prince resisted the attempt, until he was pacified by a payment, made to him, of three hundred marks of silver, and three of gold.

To return to your ancient Saints, St. Columbkille, and others; let us examine in what degree they individually esteemed the authority of the Bishop of Rome. I shall extract the following facts from a very curious, and very scarce

* Ex vetust. cod. Eccl. Armagh. See Usher's Religion of the Ancient Irish, p. 75.

† St. Jerome says, that the Bishop of any other See is equal to that of Rome—Epist. ad Evagrium. See the Holy Scriptures here—Mat. xx. 25 and 26. Mark x. 42 and 43. and Luke xii. 25 and 26.

‡ O'Con. or Columbanus's 5th let. p. 45.

book, written by a Roman Catholic of the name of Lynch;* he informs us, and the same fact is told by many others, that St. Columbkille was excommunicated by the then Pope, as was also another Saint, entitled Romualdus; but they disclaimed the Pontiff's power, disobeyed his commands, and protested against this exercise of authority. The reason of this excommunication is material to us; it was because Columbkille obstinately persisted in holding the old faith, which had been handed down to him from his ancestors, who had received it from the disciples of St. John; it was because he refused to admit of the authority of the Church of Rome to decide points of dispute; it was because, rejecting the infallibility of the Pope, he made strong battle against the attempts that were then making to alter the form of the old Religion of the country. The Saint himself wrote to the Sovereign Pontiff Boniface, to bid him beware of deviating from the true faith, and even of heresy;† so far was he from allowing his infallibility; as for the usurped power of excommunication, it was not only opposed by him; but Lynch, in speaking of the transaction, asserts, that the assumption of it was the commencement of the ruin of Ireland.

Saint Columbkille, St. Colman, St. Aidan, St. Adamnan, St. Finan, or Fin-barry, and others, were in discipline altogether unconnected with Rome; they were Presbyters, or Priests; they were Abbots, and not Bishops, and all Bishops were subject to them in their districts.‡ The Bishop, indeed, of Iona, the Island of St. Columbkille,§ was elected by the Monks of the Monastery, and consecrated in it.|| Fordun says, that "before the coming of Palladius, the Scots had, as teachers of the faith, and administrators, only Presbyterians, and Monks." This they took from their founder, St. Columbkille; and we have already seen that his Church differed also in the mode of tonsure, and in their liturgy, and offices, from the Church of Rome.

With respect to St. Columbkille, indeed, there exist testimonies of an extraordinary degree of pre-eminence attached to him; he is not only called, by Colgan, (p. 498,) "the Primate of the Picts and Scots;" but he was declared, at a Council, "the Primate of all the Irish Bishops." This title was continued for some years to his successors, the Abbots of Iona; and, as such, St. Adamnan presided at a Synod which was holden A.D. 695.¶

* Alithin, St. Maloes, 1664. p. 75. Vide O'Con. 53. and Bower.

† O'Con. Rer. Hib. Scrip. Epis. Nunc, cxxxiv., and Note; and Bower *ib.* p. 486.

‡ Jamies. Hist. of Culdees, p. 92, from Sax. Chron. and Bede.

§ Jani. p. 49. from An. of Ulster.

¶ Columb. 3d letter, p. 44.

¶ See Smith's Life of Col. p. 152.

I have already spoken of the Council assembled at Whitby, and the controversy between St. Colman and Wilfred, about the celebration of Easter. It was holden in the year 664, long after Rome had sent emissaries both to England and to Ireland; and a slight detail of the events connected with it will shew, how very independent of Rome the Irish Church was, both at the time when the Council was holden, and also in times still more ancient.* St. Colman, who was called from Lindisfarne, but originally from the Island of Iona, to be Archbishop of York, having asserted that the mode of celebrating Easter, which he had received from his fathers, was derived from St. John, declares thus: "We with the same confidence celebrate the same, as his disciples Polycarpus and others did; neither dare we, for our parts, neither will we change this." Wilfrid accused him thus, that, "out of the two utmost Isles of the Ocean, he and his party did fight with the whole world." The issue was, that the King was terrified with the threats of Rome; but Colman was not to be moved; and, taking with him such as rejected the Easter of the Roman Catholic Church, and their tonsure, &c. returned back to Scotland; and Smith, in his Life of Columba, says, that he retired to Ireland; where he built some Monasteries. Wilfrid was then made Archbishop; but, as he would not receive consecration from the Bishops of the Britons, or of the Scots, he went beyond seas for the purpose. In the mean time, Oswi, the King, whose heart was with the old Religion, appointed "a most religious servant of God, and an admired Doctor that came from Ireland," named Ceadda, to the See of York in his stead.†

It is of no importance to carry this history further; it is enough to remark, that the ancient doctrines of Christianity had been derived from other sources than the See of Rome, and had been commonly received throughout these Islands, when the Roman Catholic opinions were first preached therein; and to admire the noble, steady, disinterested conduct of St. Colman, who resigned his See, rather than his religious tenets. Does not this history convince you, my fellow countrymen, that you are much deceived by those of your Clergy who tell you, that theirs is the old Religion of this Island? Do you not see, in this example, how little was the command of the Pope, the authority of his Church, or the infallibility of either, thought of

* Beda Lib. iii. Hist. cap. 25.

† Usher's Religion of the Ancient Irish, c. ix. and x. The MS. of Frigidod. Vit. Wilfrid. in Bib. Cot. is thus:—

"Nos seriem patriam. non frivola scripta tenemus;

"Discipulo eusebii," (vel sancti,) "Polycarpo dante Johannis, &c. &c.

"Atque nefas dixit, si quis contraria dixit ———"

during the first ages of Christianity in this land? The subject of the dispute above-mentioned may not have been material towards the settling of doctrine which was essential to life everlasting; but, for that very reason, I press it the stronger here, to shew how little the Pope was thought of: for, had I begun with a point of mere consequence towards salvation, it might be said, that it was the importance of the tenet, and not the disregard and jealousy of Papal authority, that gave rise to the opposition. And here let me ask you, is it not most strange in the leaders of your Church, now-a-days, to deny to the King a Veto on the nomination of your Bishops, after their election, when it was enjoyed by the Kings of England, and of Ireland, upwards of a thousand years, before the Reformation took place.

We shall find in the history of St. Bede, how others of your ancient Saints, as St. Aidan, and St. Finan, (or, as it is now corrupted, St. Fin-Barry,) agreed with St. Colman, and St. Columbkil, in thinking for themselves, upon the above-mentioned matters of dispute.* And now, let me press one point here, which is remarkable, and proves, that in the time of Bede, the Church of Rome had by no means assumed the high tone which her Clergy have since done, declaring, as they now do in the face of the very Gospel of Christ, that salvation could not be had out of it. St. Bede, who was of her communion, so far from telling us that St. Colman, St. Aidan, or St. Finan, must be damned for opposing the opinion of the Pope, and of his Church, actually lavishes upon them as much admiration as the best friend they have among their countrymen now is taught to do from his youth. He gives, especially to St. Colman, the greatest credit for his conduct; and tells us, that by the ministry of Aidan, who was sent for by King Oswi, in the year 635,† the kingdom of Northumberland, or indeed all Bernicia, which included both that county and Durham, were recovered from Paganism, to which it had of late returned. There was no trace of Christianity there, says Bede,‡ until the coming of those holy men. He also informs us, that, by means of St. Finan, and St. Dimna, and other Missionaries from Ireland, the same was done in Essex, Middlesex, and almost all the central part of England, at that time called the kingdom of Mercia, as well as in other parts of the country. Rapin, in his History of England, says,§ “It is surprisingly strange, that the conversion of the English should be ascribed to Austin, rather than to Aidan, to Finan, to Colman, to Cedd, to Dimna, and the other Scottish” (or Irish) “Monks; who undoubtedly laboured much more

* Bed. Hist. Lib. iii. throughout.

† Ledw. 65.

‡ Lib. iii. c. 2.

§ Fol. Lond. 1732, p. 80.

" abundantly than he." " Before the Benedictines were spread over the Island, the Monks of St. Columba attended," &c. This subject might be much extended by matter exceedingly interesting. And here it may be pleasing to remark, that Ireland not only sent out her teachers* to England, but to the rest of Europe, from whence Christianity had been scared by persecution. It is enough for me to refer to the authentic histories of St. Columbkille, and of St. Kilian, who both worked in these Missionary labours; to mention the famous Alcuinus, the tutor of Charlemagne, who vigorously opposed the canons of the second Council of Nice; and Vergilius, who was made Bishop of Saltzburg by King Pepin,† and who was proscribed by the Pope Zachary, for maintaining that the earth is a globe. In fine, so many were the Missionaries from Ireland into Europe, upon the revival of the Christian Religion, after the times of persecution, that a writer observes, that all foreign Saints, whose origin cannot be traced in the countries of France, Italy, &c. are supposed to have come from Ireland, or from Scotland.‡

But to return to our subject: St. Bede tell us, that the aforesaid Saints and others were sent from Ireland, and from Scotland, to England, for the above-mentioned purposes. We have seen that many of them opposed the See of Rome; let us then admire the liberality of those early Christians, and let it be a motive to us to cease from that doctrine, the peculiar disgrace of the Popish Religion, which, calling itself Catholic, but without any peculiar right to that name, excludes all from the hope of salvation who do not die in its faith. It is said by Eusebius, of Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, and Anicetus, Bishop of Rome, who flourished in the second century, that they entirely differed from each other in the times of observing Easter, and other ceremonies of the Church; yet the former admitted the latter to administer the Eucharist in his Church. The system of exclusion was equally unknown in our Islands. St Bede says of St. Aidan especially—" Although he could not keep Easter contrary to the manner of them which had sent them, yet he was diligent to perform the work of faith, and godliness, and love, according to the manner used by all holy men." And again, " he commended his doctrine to all, by living according to his precepts." He says, that these men were honoured by the Bishops of the opposite faith, who addressed them, in their letters, thus—" To our Lords, and most dear

* It is said that the Irish brought their letters into Britain at this time, and hence the similarity between them and the Saxon character. See here Sir Thomas Aspley on the origin of writing, p. 115, &c.

† *Us. Syl. Epist. Hib.* p. 131, &c.

‡ See a note in Smith's *Life of St. Columbkille*, p. 55.

"brethren, the Bishops and Abbots,"* &c. Ionas, also, in his *Life of Columba*, (c. 1.) observes, of Ireland, "It was a nation, although without such laws as governed other people, flourished in the vigour of Christian doctrine, so as to exceed the faith of all the neighbouring nations."

Our Saviour especially enjoins thus to the disciples of his humbling doctrines: "Neither be ye called Masters, for one is your Master, Christ;" (Mat. xxiii. 10.) and St. Paul acknowledges, that "other foundation no man can lay, but that which is laid, which is Christ Jesus." 1 Cor. iii. 2. These Saints of Ireland, then, although they might well contend, with the disciples of St. Peter, their claim to the Apostleship of those who were Gentiles, and not Jews, since they read that "the Gospel of the uncircumcision was committed" especially unto St. Paul, (Gal. ii. 7.) stopped not to dispute about foolish genealogies, but taught the truth of Christ's Gospel to all who needed their instruction. Nor were the truly pious of the Roman Catholic Church jealous of their labours; nor did these latter as yet claim the possession of the only keys to that door, of which Christ himself has said, "Knock, and it shall be opened unto you." (Mat. vii. 7. See Rhemish version.)

Not to enter into an invidious exposure of your Church, its weak claim to infallibility, universality, and exclusive salvation; and without dwelling upon its divisions,† which, of themselves, make it forfeit a right to all these attributes; I shall close this head, with a very short history of its gradual encroachments towards the enormous power which it now possesses in this land.

I do verily believe, and am persuaded, that, had the See of Rome continued to have been always as moderate in its pretensions as it was in the year 430, when St. Patrick arrived here, it would have troubled the Island but very little, after it was well satisfied, that the entire country embraced Christianity; for we find it scarcely interfering with Religion here, until long after the time when the Danes burned and pillaged the great Cities and Colleges every where in the Island, and

* Indeed, St. Bede wrote his third Book in praise of the Culdees. (Ledw. p. 65.)

† There have been sometimes two, nay, three Popes at a time. Look into a writer of the Church, the author of "*Il Cardinalismo di Santa Chiesa*," P. i. Lib. ii. p. 164—from which I translate the following sentence. "Amongst all the churches that have been hitherto in the world, there never has been found any so subject to revolutions, changes, and confusions, as the Roman Church; so many anti-Popes, such schisms, such heresies, such events, such disputes, such confusions; so many suspensions of Councils, so many persecutions of Pontiffs, such false opinions, such universal scandals, such tyrannies within and without, so many intestine wars among the Ecclesiastics, such hatreds."

when they were finally expelled in the year 1004, left every part of Ireland a desert behind them. The nation continued then to revive, until about the year 1172; when it had so far recovered as, by the accounts of all historians, to be in a more prosperous state at that time, and for 100 years afterwards, than it had been from the ninth century, until of very late years. The Popes Adrian IV. and Alexander III. cast, therefore, a longing eye upon it, as a very fit and proper place into which to introduce not only their power, but the very lucrative tax of a certain sum upon every dwelling, called in those days Peter's pence. They, accordingly, wrote very pretty and pious letters to Henry the II., King of England;* and, although there was much said of Christian pity, for the ignorant Irish, in their encouragements to that Prince to go and make war against them, and spill their blood, and subdue their country, a great deal more is said of Peter's pence. At length Adrian, most impudently, gives or rather sells Ireland to King Henry, by a bull; and this was the first acknowledged usurpation made upon you by a Pope; selling you, like the cattle of the soil, without the shadow of a right; and, under the pretence of love for your immortal souls, authorising the butchering of your bodies; enforcing an exorbitant tax, (for a penny then was of as high a value as two shillings and sixpence is now,) by arrogance, accompanied with hypocrisy, and with cruelty.

I do not love to dwell upon this subject; but there is a fact which I cannot conceal from you. A Pope, successor to Adrian, surpassed him in bold pretensions, and actually sold Ireland to the Emperor of Germany, Charles V.; and afterwards to Philip II., King of Spain; authorising them both to go and make what civil wars among you they pleased. And, some short time afterwards, A.D. 1643, Pope Urban issued to the entire of Ireland, "a full and plenary indulgence, and" "absolute remission of sins," to all persons who will fight against the "heretics, and other enemies of the Catholic" "faith."† These heretics, my friends, were your own fellow countrymen; who, many of them, influenced by the principles of the Bible, differed from the Church of Rome in their views of Religion; and were, therefore, given over, by the Pontiff, to indiscriminate slaughter; under the premium, upon their murder, of eternal happiness to those who would commit the deed.‡

The turbulence of the Pope's own legates in Ireland, somewhat afterwards, was so great, that Rinuncini received a letter from the entire confederated body of Roman Catholics, assembled at Kilkenny, "exhorting him to depart from a

* See Usher's Syl. Let. 46 and 47.

† See State Trials, vol. i. p. 462.

‡ Parr's Life of Usher, p. 89.

"kingdom so long harassed by his factious turbulence;"* and, a kingdom, also, most lamentably changed from its former noble independence. This legate indeed did depart; but one hundred and fifty years have passed since that event, and these years have been actively occupied by the friends of the See of Rome, to make their party good. By these persons the Religion of the Bible has been kept from you; its professors were blameable, ignorant, or indolent, or were alarmed, or possessed not the constraining love of Christ; and, at length, we find the Roman Catholic Clergy of this Island, which once spurned at the unjust excommunication of a Pope, and bade him to beware of heresy himself, possess among them a Priest so bigotted as to declare to Dr. Adam Clarke, but a few years since,† that, if the Church desired him to deny the existence of a "God, he should conceive himself bound to obey, and believe in compliance." May that God forbid that I should be so illiberal as to suppose that there are many Roman Catholic Clergymen, in any part of the world, who would think, or speak thus profanely; but there was this one, and he had the care of souls in a parish! This is, indeed, a most awful reflection; and, as all that Clergy more or less abide by the tradition of their Church, and all of them more or less exclude those of other communions from the proffered benefits of the Gospel, I have thought it necessary to say thus much, in order to shew you, how different from theirs were the sentiments of your ancestors, the old Saints and people of this land, who held the pure doctrines of the Bible, and of the first Apostles, which Rome had not as yet corrupted, "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."

To close this head, I shall briefly state a very few facts, and leave them to serve as testimonies, for, or against, the authority of the Roman Church; without making further comment on them. 1st, The Prelates of Council of Constance, holden at the beginning of the fifteenth century, (sess. 13.) speak of "having taken the advice of many Doctors of Theology;" plainly allowing, that they did not act under the infallible influence and guidance of the Holy Spirit; they also conclude the meetings, at General Councils, with a prayer to God, "to spare their ignorance, and pardon their error." (Consil. Tom. i.) 2dly, Some Councils have taken upon them to declare against the decisions of others; thus, among other instances in abundance, that of 787 excommunicated those who concurred in obeying the decisions of one holden in 754; also St. Augustine allows that a General Council may be corrected, therefore it may err. (Lib. ii. cont. Donatist.) And, 3dly, The Roman

* *Irel. Hist. of Ireland*, vol. iii. p. 329, 330.

† See his tract on the Eucharist.

Catholic Church discards the authority of several General Councils, and among the rest of that above-mentioned of the year 754; although there were 338 Bishops present at its meetings, while, at the first Council of Trent, 316 only signed the decrees. What, then, is the poor inquirer to do, who neglects the plain light of the Gospel, to follow the *ignis fatuus* of fallible human authority? If he be humbly willing to be directed by that of the Church; what is it? where is it? and whence can it be procured, shining with any clearness, with any steadiness? Not surely in the flickering rays of human tradition, which are borrowed from the sublunary fires of the Roman Catholic Church.

But I have done with this head of authority; and conclude, that St. Patrick indeed taught some things new, but much more moderately and more purely, than St. Austin; so that, so far from being opposed, he was received among the old people, at least as well as a Moravian, or a Presbyterian, would be in a Protestant country: for, my friends, the Christian world had not as yet heard Bishops curse mankind; and teach that all who were not of one particular denomination of the Christian Church should be certainly damned. But, my friends, from henceforth, throughout this tract, St. Patrick shall make common cause with all the ancient Saints of Ireland, of whatever denomination they were, Culdee, or Roman, deriving their faith through St. John, St. Paul, or even St. Peter; and I shall now proceed to shew to you, distinctly, and in order, that for many years after St. Patrick arrived here, your ancestors, one and all, held opinions, on important and on cardinal points of doctrine, different from what the Roman Catholic Clergy teach you now. It will consequently follow, that the doctrines of that persuasion are an attempt to change the old Religion of the land; and I shall endeavour to ascertain, and to prove, the exact time when each new opinion was first introduced among you. But with regard to this latter point, I must request considerable indulgence; for it is of the very nature of error to creep in by degrees—the serpent is sly, and insinuating; he may sometimes dart upon his prey, but he always gains his vantage ground, by subtle and unperceived approaches. Practices, whether bad, or good, may come in by tacit consent; and “grow after into a general custom, the beginning whereof is past man’s memory.” This want of foresight respecting consequences, and of insight to futurity, will also account for the silence of many ancient Fathers, respecting particular practices of the present Roman Catholic Church; for how could they give an opinion concerning circumstances which they neither saw nor foresaw? Let it rather be remembered, that the very silence of an ancient Theologian, upon any vital

subject which is at present controverted, demonstrates that the subject matter of the controversy had no existence in his day.

I shall find it indispensable here, to take the New Testament in my hand; and, with it, to steady and direct my steps: for whatever was the faith of our ancestors, whether it were Popish, or otherwise, it could not have been right, if it were not founded on, and taken from, that inspired record which inform us of the doctrine and practice of our blessed Lord, and of his immediate disciples; neither could it have been the most ancient Christian faith, if it were not agreeable to the doctrines of the Apostles and the primitive Christians.

CHAPTER III.

MARRIAGE OF THE CLERGY.

LET us first consider some matters in which the Roman Catholics of the present day differ very much indeed from their ancestors, and which are not perhaps such as belong to doctrines the most important towards salvation, but yet which are considered by them in a great degree essential. We shall proceed by degrees to others of greater consequence; and, first, concerning the Marriage of the Clergy.

In truth the practice of the Clergy having wives was quite common, and justified, in the days of St. Patrick. This is clear from the records of a Synod holden by that Saint himself; in this Synod order is given that the wives of the Clergy shall not walk abroad with their heads uncovered.* Jocelin, the historian of St. Patrick, and the confession of this Saint inform us, that his father was Calphurnius, a Deacon, and his grandfather, Potitus, a Priest. This is partly confirmed by the ancient Poem of St. Fiech; and Gildas and Nennius, the two earliest British historians, mention the wives both of Bishops and of the Clergy; while from the latter it appears to have been accounted honourable to have a Priest for a father. A canon of Northumberland, A.D. 950, declares thus—"If a Priest dismiss one wife, and take another, let him be anathema."† The marriage of the Clergy further appears to have been common from numberless other works, and in this country is proved by incontestible evidence; not only does Giraldus Cambrensis, who lived in the reign of Henry II., but many others of his day, complain much that it was at that time common for the Priests, not only to continue to their children the succession in

* See Spelman's and Williams' Concilia.

† Ledw. 67.

their temporal estates, but to procure for them the succession to their spiritual promotions. It is also on record that, in the very See of Armagh, for fifteen generations, "the Primacy" hath passed to the chief of the sept, as it were by a kind of "inheritance."* This continued for the space of 208 years, in the 10th, 11th, and 12th centuries; and thus Amalgaid, who was Primate so late as 1021, was the father of two Bishops of that See.† That Celsus of Armagh was married, appears from a MS. in Bib. T.C.D. (c. i. 26.); and it is there said, that his marriage was "*more gentis suæ*," or according to the fashion of his country. He died in the year 1129. Giraldus says, that the practice was known in both the British Isles. This custom gave rise, in our Island, to a species of property known by the names of the lands of Corbes, Herenachs and Termoners.‡ These were originally Ecclesiastical properties, belonging to the Corbes, &c., whose situations in the Church the Archbishop describes; and, as these persons ordained their children, for the purpose of giving to them the succession in these properties, they became thus inherited by custom. While the origin of their having become so has ceased to be known, the fact proves the prevalence of marriage among the Clergy.

This abuse of children succeeding to the Ecclesiastical promotion of their parents was abolished by Pope Innocent III., A.D. 1200. The truth, then, of the marriage of your ancient Saints does not admit of contradiction; and the oldest Church of all, to wit, that of the primitive Christians, did not hold it to be improper. This is clear from Scripture. Consult, in your own version, Tit. i. 6., where it is said, a Bishop must be contented with one wife, plainly allowing him one. See also 1 Tim. iii. 2 and 12., and Heb. xiii. 4.; but still more strongly in 1 Tim. iv. 3., the doctrine of "forbidding to marry" is classed among "the doctrines of devils." See also Mark i. 30., 1 Pet. iii. 5. Gregory the Great, in his answers to Augustine, allows of the marriage of the Clergy; and the forcing upon Priests a single life, by a vow, was first done by Pope Hildebrand, in the year 1047;§ but it was contrary to the opinion of the Holy Fathers, and was for a long time disobeyed:¶ Pius II. and the great Canonist Panormitan,¶ think, that the marriage of the Clergy might be allowed.**

Observe, by the way, that marriage was not considered by

* Usher on Corbes, &c. in Val. Collect. vol. i. p. 193.

† See Harris's Ware, Archbishops of Armagh, p. 49 and 54.

‡ See Usher's tract on these. Val. Collect. vol. i. p. 192.

§ Mat. West.

¶ See Spelman Conc. vol. ii. p. 36.

¶ De Clericis conjug. Can. "cum olim."

** Pius II. in gestis Conc. Basil.

your ancestors to be a Sacrament; it is ranked by Sedulius, as among the things that are not spiritual.*

I shall not dwell here upon the immoral consequences which, as you all know, follow from the universal celibacy of the Clergy; as I do not wish to place before you invidious matter. I shall refer you, therefore, to the works of St. Bernard and others, as my only object is to put you in the way of understanding the true answer to the question, "who sowed the tares?"

CHAPTER IV.

OF THE ANCIENT IRISH MONASTERIES.

I SHALL now say a few words to you about the Monasteries of your ancestors. St. Bede tells us, that the people flocked to them, not for the feeding of their body, but for the learning of the Word of God.† In these places, during the times of persecution or of corruption, holy people took refuge. "Among the Scottish and Irish some thing as yet remained of the doctrine of the knowledge of God, and of civil honesty; because there was no terror of arms to these utmost ends of the world." The Monks also of these times did not live in idleness, or retire in consequence of superstition, or in surly disgust: their rule was thus—"They which live in Monasteries should work in silence, and eat their own bread."‡ It is to be observed, that these holy Colleges not only sent out St. Colman, St. Aidan, St. Cuthbert, and numberless other extraordinary men; but almost all the ancient Prelates of the Church. Their great occupation was the instruction of youth: and they were in fact, not only the seminaries of the Ministry, but the great schools of the age. The persecutions of Christianity had driven holy men in great numbers to Ireland: its distance from the rest of Europe made it to be free from corruption in its doctrine; and its remoteness, as well as its being an island, made it to be so quiet and fit a place for study, that it may well be considered to have been the University of the Christian world; before that it was overrun by the Danes, who, in the year 838,§ burned the great Colleges of Armagh, and destroyed all the others in the country.¶ Camden, the great antiquary, asserts—"Sapissime in nostris Scripturis

* See his Commentary on Rom. i.

† Hist. Lib. iii. c. 26, &c.

‡ In vit. Fursei. See also Columban's Regula.

§ Brit. Ec. Antiq. U4. p. 447.

¶ Bede, Lib. iii. c. 26 and 27. Camden's Brit. p. 730. Vit. S. Sulgeni, &c.

"legitur, amandatus est ad disciplinam in Hiberniam." "We very often read in our writers, that such a one was sent for instruction to Ireland," and so it is very frequently in Bede. The third work quoted in the note says, of the person whose life it records,

"Exemplo patrum, commotus amore legendi,

"Ivit ad Hibernos, sophia mirabile clatos."

"Being, like his fathers, moved with the love of learning, he went among the Irish, who were remarkably celebrated for their wisdom." Alcuinus, a learned Irishman, was the preceptor of Charlemagne;* and another of our countrymen, St. Feargil, or Virgilius, was sent for by Pepin, the great King of France, who made him a Bishop. His history is curious, and is not foreign from the subject of this address. He held an opinion that the world is round: this was a doctrine that was very much disliked at Rome; and the Saint was ordered to deny his assertion. He, however, thought that the truth was better worth minding, than the authority of the Pope—and the Pontiff, whose name was Zachary, summoned him to answer before the Apostolic See for this heresy!!!†

But to return. This Island was, in old times, an Island of Colleges for the education of youth, established for the benefit of all ‡ Europe; and, as Dr. Johnson has written, was a place whence savage clans and roving barbarians derived the benefits of knowledge and the blessings of religion. Dr. Ledwich, in speaking of the ancient Irish Culdees, declares with truth, "that they firmly opposed the errors and superstitions of the Church of Rome, till towards the end of the twelfth century; when they were at length overpowered and supplanted by a new race of Monks, as inferior to them in learning and piety, as they surpassed them in wealth and ceremonies."

The Monks in Roman Catholic countries were of a very different character indeed; and it is remarkable, that the first person who was bold enough to attack their idleness, and covetousness, which degenerated at last into the practice of common begging, was a countryman of our own, the famous Richard Fitz Ralph, who was Archbishop of Armagh. This great and pious man is well known to many of you already by his fame. "In the town of Dundalk," at the time when the book to which I refer was published, to wit, in the year 1633, "there was a fountain dedicated to him, by the name of St. Richard, to which all the neighbourhood flocked, thinking that whosoever drank of the waters thereof would be free from fever."§ His shrine was there; and there, also, was his ring preserved,

* See Cane Hist. Liter.

† See Bower's Lives of the Popes iii. 340.

‡ See Smith's Life of Columba, p. 155.

§ See the Preface to his Defensorium Curatorum, Par. 1633.

endowed, as was supposed, with many virtues. His birth-day was celebrated there with great devotion; and the writer whom I quote declares, that "no one can doubt these things in Dunkalk, without creating a general outcry."* He was also so esteemed abroad, that, when he died, a Cardinal was heard to exclaim, "that a mighty pillar of the Church was fallen."† I wish to introduce you formally to this great man, because he was so anxious to give the people the possession of the wisdom which is necessary to salvation, that he translated the Bible into your native language. With regard to the point before us, he made every possible effort to restore the Monks of his age to the purity which they enjoyed in their original institution—"ad puritatem suæ institutionis primariæ"—such as they were when St. Patrick countenanced, and St. Columbkille governed them; for, even at home, they had fallen off very much.

This pious and excellent Prelate and Saint preached, in London, at St. Paul's cross, unto all the people in the year 1356, and at Avignon, in 1357, before the Pope, and the Sacred College of Cardinals, against the idle Monks of that day: "Scarcely," says he, "could any great, or mean man, of the Clergy, or Laity, eat his meat, but such kind of beggars would be at his elbow;" and that, "such kind of begging, as well by Christ, as by his Apostles, and disciples, *by the Church*, and by the Holy Scriptures, was both dissuaded, and also re-proved." See further, for the truth of this assertion of his, 2 Thess. iii. 12.‡

It is time for me to declare to you, what kind of holy learning this was that people were sent so far to procure. And, here again, I must refer to St. Bede. "The followers of Columbkille," he asserts,§ "would receive only those things which they could learn from the Scriptures; diligently observing the works of piety and of charity." Now two of the most important points for our consideration, my dear fellow countrymen, and those indeed which are the great object of this inquiry, naturally spring out of this remark: The first is, that our ancestors taught the Scriptures, not only in general, but to the youth, and in their schools. Secondly, that they taught them, simply, without mixing with them the traditions of the Church; and, of course, they were quite convinced, that all the Word of God was written, and that none of it remained

* Thomas of Walsingham, in his History, says, that he proved this clearly by many arguments; indeed his work is unanswerable: but the Clergy of England, failing in the support which they had promised him, and the Monks contributing a large sum to the Pope, he failed in his efforts; and the begging orders were confirmed, with some trifling corrections. See Walsingham.

† Fox's Acts and Monum. vol. i. p. 472, quoted by Walsingham.

‡ Rich. Arm. in Defens. Curat. p. 56, 7, and 104. Ed. Par. 1625.

§ Hist. Lib. iii. c. 4.

unwritten, or to be settled, either by traditions, or by the authority of the Church.

CHAPTER V.

OF THE READING OF THE SCRIPTURES BY THE ANCIENT INHABITANTS, AND IN THEIR NATIVE LANGUAGE.

THE first preachers of Christianity taught the Scriptures universally. St. Bede informs us of St. Aidan, the principal of the successors of St. Columbkille, that "all such as went with him, whether Clergy or Laity, were obliged to exercise themselves, either in reading of the Scriptures, or in the learning of Psalms."* And he also tells us, that "the people flocked anxiously on the Lord's day, to St. Aidan, and St. Finan, and St. Colman, to the Church and Monasteries; not for the feeding of their bodies, but for the hearing of the Word of God." In short, St. Adamnan, in his Life of St. Columbkille,† says, that the rule by which this Saint taught his disciples to support their doctrines, was, by putting forward the witness of the Holy Scriptures; "Prolatis Sacre Scripturæ testimoniis." Long before the time of any of these Saints, St. Chrysostom, who was the most eloquent writer of the Holy Fathers, and whose word is, beyond all question, relied on, writes thus, about the year 400: "Although thou shouldest go to the Ocean, and those British Isles, &c.; thou shouldest hear all men, every where, discoursing matters out of the Scriptures; with another voice indeed, but not with another faith."‡ So here we see, that the Scriptures were in common use among the Laity of these Islands, so early as before the year 400. It is necessary to observe also, the testimony which St. Chrysostom brings to the purity of the faith of the Irish Church; and to point out that this great writer bears witness to the conformity of its doctrine with his own.

Agreeably with this evidence of the general reading of the Scriptures, we find Sedulius,§ a native Saint, cotemporary with St. Patrick, saying, "Search the Scriptures, in which the will of God is contained."|| Claudius Scotus¶ also, a celebrated

* Ec. Hist. Lib. iii. c. 4. and 26.

† See Smith's Life of St. Columbkille, p. 114.

‡ Chrys. de util. Eccl. Scrip. Ed. Par. 1721, T. iii. p. 71.

§ Comment. in Ephes. v. 17.

|| As I shall very frequently have occasion to mention the name of Sedulius, I shall inform you here, that he was an eminent Irish Divine, who was almost cotemporary with St. Patrick. He flourished in the year 490; and to him Gelasius, the Bishop of Rome at that time, with his Synod of 70 Bishops, gave the title of the "venerable Sedulius;" he was also stiled "the Catholic writer;" and, being set up by all the great Divines of your Church, his authority must be considered as unimpeachable. See O'Con. Rer. Hib. Ann. Prol. ii. p. 70. Synod. Rom. sub. Gelasio. ¶ In Mat. Lib. iii.

author of our native Church, writes, thus, about the year 815 :
 “ That men, therefore, err, because they know not the Scriptures ; and, because they are ignorant of the Scriptures, they consequently know not Christ, who is the power of God, and the Word ;” and all this is conformable to what St. Patrick originally thought ; for we find him attributing * the lawlessness of the people, to the want of the knowledge of Christ ; for Christ, says he, being the end of the law, all must be lawless who are ignorant of him ; and he considers the great remedy thereof to consist in bringing people to Christ, by pouring the thunder of the Gospel among them all.

Before I proceed, it will be useful to observe, that in the first ages, even of the Roman Catholic Church, neither the prayers nor the Scriptures of the Church were locked up from the understanding of the congregation : for, besides that St. Jerome translated the Bible into the mother tongue of his country—besides that Nicholas de Lyra, and even Thomas Aquinas, persons whom you have all heard of, and of the highest authority in your Church, wrote against prayer in an unknown language ; and Cardinal Cajetan confessed that prayer ought to be in a known tongue—besides, I say, all these, the Council of Lateran, in the year 1215, made order that, as there “ were in various places mixed persons with different languages, the Bishop should take care to provide fit men to perform divine offices, &c., according to the variety of their languages.” † It is further true that in the neighbouring Island, the Scriptures were used in five different languages in the time of St. Bede. ‡ He informs us of the fact thus : “ In the language of five nations it,” (the Island of Great Britain,) “ did search and confess one and the same knowledge of the highest truth, and of the true sublimity ; to wit, the English, the Britons, the Scots,” (meaning our vernacular language,) “ the Picts, and the Latins.”

This remark brings me back to our native land. We find there the Scriptures in the hands of the Laity, in their native tongue—a practice justified by our ancient Saints. §

We shall now demonstrate, that they were even put into the hands of women, and of children ; for the former, see the Life of Burgundofora by Jonas ; or, what is yet more direct to our point, the recommendation of St. Patrick himself. In speaking of the modest life that best becomes the female sex, he says

* In abusion, sæc. p. 92.

† Decretal. Greg. Lib. i. c. 14.

‡ Hist. Ec. Lib. i. c. 1.

§ See *Patric. de abusionibus sæc.* Columb. in *Monast. et in epis. ad Scythum.* See *Goldasti Paræneticorum vet. p. i.* Columb. *Ep. ad Hernaldum.* “ *Sint tibi Divitiæ divina dogmata legis,*” “ *Let the Divine precepts of the law be your treasure.*” *Sedul. & Claud. ub. sup.*

that such a life "delights in good morals, and vegetates the soul by continual meditations* on, and reading of the Scriptures." For the latter, which is more to our purpose, St. Bede informs us of St. Fursey, A.D. 653, and another author, of our great Saint Kilian, A.D. 685,† that, "from the time of their very childhood, they applied to the study of the Scriptures." Boniface, the first Archbishop of Mentz, further praises the education of St. Livinus, that, in his youth, he was in the same manner employed. But, yet further still, your great object of veneration, St. Columbkil himself, owed his learning and his sanctity to the study of the Scriptures from a child. Ionas, his biographer, informs us, that "so within his breast were laid up the treasures of the Holy Scriptures, that, within the compass of his youthful years," ("intra adolescentiæ ætatem,") within the age of puberty, "he composed an elegant exposition of the whole book of Psalms." Nor is this all, for Jocelin,‡ in his Life of St. Patrick, acquaints us, that the practice of this Saint was precisely similar to that of St. Columbkil; and that he was used to sing from the Psalter, for a considerable portion of every morning, even in the same period of youth, "ab ipso primævo pueritatis flore," from the very earliest age of puberty. "What, my friends! were the boys Patrick, and Columbkil, not only readers of the holy book, but commentators thereon, and shall our children be refused the use of that book, which is able to make them wise unto salvation? If by such means such Saints were instructed and educated, why should we grudge these powerful aids to our fellow countrymen, many of whom might thus be assisted, with divine grace, to equal the zeal and piety of such predecessors? Shall the practice of the oldest times, handed down to us from the very age of the Apostles, as well through the usage of your ancestors, as of the first Christians, be discouraged now, when it has pleased God to put into the hearts of your best friends, and of the true patriots of Ireland, to revive it? a practice not only of your ancestors, but also of the Apostolic age. For how did the Apostles act in this respect? St. Paul writes thus to Timothy; (chap. iii. of 2d Epist.) "continue thou in the things which thou hast learned, and which have been committed to thee, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and because from thy infancy thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which can instruct thee to sal-

* "Et assiduis S. Scripturarum meditationibus, & eloquiis, animam vegetat." De abusion. sæc. c. v. de pudicitia, p. 77, Ed. opera Jac. Waræi, Lond. 1656.

† Afterwards Bishop of Wirtzburg, on the Continent. See O'Conor, Ann. Epist. Nunc. p. 145; and Preface to Ibero-Celtic Transactions.

‡ As edited by Messingham, c. xii.

"vation, by the faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture inspired of God is profitable to teach, to reprove, to correct, "to instruct in justice"—(Rhémish version)—all along demonstrating, both in principle and in practice, the necessity of teaching, and correcting, and guiding the child, from his very youth. And, permit me to ask you, who was it that thus instructed Timothy, to whom in this epistle these words are addressed? His grandmother Lois, and his mother Eunice, as appears manifest from a former part of the epistle, (chap. i. v. 5.) And, now that we are inquiring into the only proper source of authority, the Word of God, as it was revealed and written of old, let us put together a few of the texts which it contains, respecting the reading of the Scriptures; before we inquire how the use of them came first to be denied to you.

As for reading them in an unknown tongue, we have seen above, that they were publicly read and explained by the Apostle, in the language of the people to whom he spoke; following in this the example, and attending to the precept of St. Paul, where he says, (1 Cor. xiv. 12, 9, 27 and 28, Rhémish version,) "Seek to abound unto the edifying of the Church;" but "except you utter by the tongue plain speech, how shall it be known what is said?" therefore, "if any speak with a tongue," "let one interpret;" "but if there be no interpreter, let him hold his peace in the church; and speak to himself and to God." Such was the rule of the oldest Church of all; and it was for the purpose that all persons, of what nation soever they were, should hear speak, in their own tongues, of "the wonderful works of God," (Acts ii. 11.) that the miraculous gift of tongues was bestowed upon the Apostles, when they were first inspired by the Holy Ghost. (See here also Nehemiah viii. 5, 6, and 7.) So far of reading out the Scriptures, by the Priests, to the people. Again, the oldest Church, or that of the immediate hearers of our blessed Saviour, directs also, that the Scriptures shall be generally read. "Search the Scriptures, for you think in them to have life everlasting, and the same are they that gave testimony of me." (John v. 39, 40.) "This is the express command of Jesus Christ himself; and, because of their obedience to this command, St. Paul declares the Jews of Berea (Acts xvii. 11.) to be "more noble than those in Thessalonica, who received the Word with all eagerness," daily searching the Scriptures, whether these things were "so." Indeed, ignorance of the Holy Word of God is mentioned, by our Saviour, as being the great cause of the many errors into which some of the greatest men among the Jews had fallen, when he tells them, "You err, not knowing the Scriptures." (Mat. xii. 29.) Now, my friends, it is remark-

able in these Scriptural directions and observations, that they apply to the books of the Old Testament, (which you are every day told should at all events be closed books to you, although equally given to us by the inspiration of God,) for the books of the New Testament were not written, at the time when the directions were given. Connected with this subject, I cannot avoid mentioning here an extraordinary fact, which tends to shew some inconsistency, if not contradiction, between the principles, and the practice of your Clergy. When the exertions that are now making throughout the Island, to put into your hands the Word of God, compelled them to acquiesce in giving to you that Word in the version authorised by your Church, the book appeared, most strange to say, with the following quotation from the Psalms, put forward prominently in the title page from Ps. xix. 8. It is given in the Latin language, in words of the following import: "The law of the Lord is an undefiled law, converting souls; the testimony of the Lord is faithful, giving wisdom to youths." Our version has it "the simple;" but the Latin is stronger, being "parvulis," or "little ones."* Now, my friends, how can persons, acknowledging such a truth, and putting it forward as the very motto of a work, justify themselves from the charge of inconsistency, if they deny that book to those youths, whoever they be; or if, in contradiction to their adopted maxim, they withhold from them the saving wisdom of the Lord's Holy Word?

With respect to the reading of the Old Testament, we have the authority of the Son of God himself, where, in addition to what I have quoted from his lips above, he further says, in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, (in the xxi. chap. of St. Luke's Gospel, v. 28, 29, 30.) when urged to permit a spirit from the other world to appear to, and speak with, the brothers of the tormented man; "if they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they believe, if one rise from the dead:" and in another place he speaks thus—"for if you did believe Moses, you would perhaps believe me also, for he wrote of me; but, if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?" (John v. 46.) Thus it was that the immortal Messiah gave, urged, and repeated his commands. Oh! my dear fellow countrymen, reflect, while yet it is time, whom are you to obey; whether is it God, or man? whether the Word of God, which he has expressly declared shall not return unto him void, (Isai. lv. 11.) or those against whom Christ himself has thus denounced—"Woe unto you, for you have taken away the key of knowledge; you your-

* See Mr. Coyne's Stereotype Rhemish Testament.

“ have not entered in, and those that were entering in you “ have hindered ? ” (Luke xi. 52.) I could, my dear fellow countrymen, add much to you from the Word of God upon this subject. I shall, however, only direct you to the following passages of the sacred book : John xx. 31. Rom. xv. 4, 1 Thess. v. 27. 2 Tim. ii. 9. 1 Pet. ii. 2. 2 Pet. i. 19. 1 John ii. 1, &c. Revel. i. 3. Ps. cxix. 9. and 27 and 105. Isai. viii. 20. and xxxiv. 16., in which last it is said, “ Seek ye out the “ book of the Lord, and read.” Look also to the practice of the Jews in 2 Chron. xvii. 8, 9. Nehem. ix. 3. Acts xvii. 2., &c.; and consult Proverbs throughout, Ps. xix. 7, 8, and 9. Mat. xi. 25. and 1 Cor. i. 26. and iii. 18, and 2 Cor. iv. 3 and 4. for the better understanding of what degree of knowledge, learning, or intellect, the Word of God is particularly addressed to, or suited to instruct; these Scriptures will shew you, that such things were calculated for children, as well as for all descriptions of persons who were grown up; and the passages will suffice to establish this—that the written Word of God was, at all times, to be the great foundation of instruction. Early in the sacred book the Lord commands Moses thus—“ These words, which I command thee this day, shall “ be in thine heart; and thou shalt tell them to thy children; “ and thou shalt meditate upon them sitting in thy house, “ and walking on thy journey,” &c. (Deut. vi. 6 and 7. Douay version.) “ These words ” are afterwards explained to be “ the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments,” which occupy the greater part of the five books of Moses, and which our Saviour commanded to be “ searched ” into and learned, as being more able to bring the rebellious heart of man to seek the road that leads to life everlasting, than would the supernatural appearance of a preacher from the dead. Among these texts, also, is the testimony and direction of Solomon; the entire of whose book is full of such teaching as this. The preacher “ sought profitable words, and wrote words most right, and full of “ truth; ” and, “ more than these, my son, require not; “ of making many books there is no end, and much study “ is an affliction of the flesh.” Let us hear, then, his conclusion of the whole matter; “ Fear God, and keep his “ commandments; for this is the whole duty of man.” (Eccles. Concluding verses. Douay version.) Another text has been mentioned to you before; “ Continue thou,” says St. Paul, “ in the things which thou hast learned, knowing of “ whom thou hast learned them; and because from thine *imagination* “ *fancy* thou hast known the Holy Scriptures.” The mo-

* The Rhemish version has it so—much stronger than that of the Church of England.

ther and grandmother of Timothy well, indeed, knew the value of that great saying of the wise man—"Train up a child in the way he should go, and, when he is old, he will not depart from it." (Prov. xxii. 6.) They, therefore, trained up their child in that "way," which is Christ alone; (John xiv. 6.) in that Word of God, (John i. 1.) which only is "able to make us wise unto salvation, through faith in Christ Jesus." "Wherefore," (as your great Apostle St. Peter exhorts,) "laying away all malice, and all guile, and dissimulations, and envies, and all detractions, as new-born babes, desire the rational milk without guile, that thereby you may grow unto salvation." 1 Pet. ii. 2.

In the case, my friends, of our venerated St. Patrick, and St. Columbkil, and others, it pleased God to put it into the hearts of their parents, that, very early indeed, they should have the Scriptures confided to their hands. I shall now endeavour to find out when they came first to be kept back from the use of the poor of Ireland; and this certainly did not happen until after the Danes had destroyed the Colleges in the ninth century; and then, I believe, the entire nation was soon hurried into such ignorance and poverty, by this disaster; and by the cruel wars and persecutions that followed it, that, not only was all its former learning destroyed, or banished, but the use of letters almost lost. Nothing can be more miserable than the state of this poor Island was for many, many years: it is quite distressing to any feeling mind to read the history of the times: and as, during this state of confusion, Colleges ceased to exist in the land, it was scarcely necessary to prohibit the reading of the Scriptures; for, I do suppose, that scarcely one thousand persons in the country could read them at any one period of time, for the space of 200 years from this great devastation. I do not think I need extend this address here to prove these facts. All our histories declare that, for many centuries, none were lettered persons but the Clergy; and whoever could read the verse, called the "neck-verse," in the Psalms, received the benefit of the Clergy; or, in other words, proved themselves by this alone to be Clergymen, and thus showed their right, as such, to be exempt from certain punishments. It was, therefore, unnecessary to prohibit the reading of the Scriptures in Ireland; and I believe it was never done, until within the last fifty years. It will, indeed, appear that your ancestors were very anxious, in days comparatively modern, that the people should have every possible opportunity of hearing the Word of God in their own tongue. I have before spoken to you of Richard, Archbishop of Armagh; in the year 1357, this great Primate, whom you call St. Richard, and who well deserves your gratitude, not only was constant

in preaching to the poor, but first translated the Scriptures into the Irish language.* Long before the Reformation, your representatives in Parliament felt the necessity of your being instructed in your Religion, through the medium of your native tongue; to prove this, I shall refer you to an Act of the reign of Richard III., passed in the year 1484;† this act relates that, whereas many of the benefices of the See of Dublin are among the native Irish, and the English Clergy are either inexperienced in the language, or else are afraid to dwell among these people, from which cause the cure of souls is “piteously neglected;” (piteuxment neglecte)—and enacts, that the Archbishop shall have liberty to present, to such livings, Clergymen of the Irish nation and language, for a certain period of time—a thing which was then unlawful, and required the interference of the Parliament, which was thus anxious to provide that the natives should hear, in their own tongue, the wonderful works of God.

I leave this matter now for your consideration; judge for

* Fox's Acts, &c. Lond. 1641, p. 542. Petrie's Hist. of the Church, p. 496. Baleus, p. 246. Scriptorum Brit. Cent. 14. See also Trithemius, in his Preface to the Defensorium Curatorum.

Richard Fitzrauf, or Fitzralph, a man singularly enlightened, and bold in declaring against the corruptions of the Church in his day, was born at Dundalk, and educated in the University of Oxford, of which he was Chancellor in the year 1333. He was first made Dean, or, according to some, Archdeacon of Litchfield; afterwards, in the year 1347, Archbishop of Armagh. According to the information of Bale, he concealed a version of the New Testament, probably made by himself, in a certain wall of his church, with the following note at the end: “When this book is found, truth will be revealed to the world; or Christ will shortly appear.” About 1530, one hundred and seventy years after his death, the copy of the New Testament above-mentioned was found, on repairing the church at Armagh.

He died in 1360, at Avignon. His bones are reported to have been brought over to Dundalk about the year 1570, by Stephen de Valle, Bishop; first of Limerick, afterwards of Meath, where he was well known, as Ware informs us, under the title of St. Richard of Dundalk. And “so great were his virtues, and so many the miracles ascribed to him, that,” notwithstanding the controversy in which he had been engaged, and which was left undecided at the time of his death, “Boniface IX. by diploma, ordered these miracles to be examined into.”—Ware, de Script. Hib. lib. 1. quoted from Brief Sketch of attempts to diffuse a knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, through the medium of the Irish Language.

The following curious fact demonstrates the scarcity of Bibles, even Latin or English, at this period:—Lewis, in his History of the English Bible, tells us, (p. 69.) that “Archbishop Fitz Ralph sent three or four of the Secular Priests of his Diocese, to study divinity at Oxford;” and that “they were forced very soon to return, because they could not find a Bible there to be sold.”

upon the Statute Roll, 2 Ric. III., c. 10, in the Roll's Office.

yourselves, why you are not allowed the free use of the book which was written for your learning, (Rom. xv. 4.) that you, "through patience and the comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope." I trust, indeed; that the objections against it come from honest, but surely they are mistaken motives. Before I close this point, let me put one or two observations to your common sense. 1st, If the comments of men be more necessary to your salvation than the written Word of God, what are you to do? The Priest is the great depository of these former; and you see him perhaps not once in a week, and many of you hear him speak not even so often: but the printed Word of God can be multiplied a thousand fold; so that there may thus be a preacher for each individual. It may be your study day and night, the companion of your walks, and may even partake of your pillow. Again, tradition may possibly tell you one thing at one time, and another at another, because man is fallible; but the Word of God remains unchangeable. Do not tell me that Priests cannot differ in matters of Religion; you will find that even Popes, who were regarded as infallible, differed extremely, not only in regard to the unwritten, but the written Word of God; for Sixtus V., having published a translation of the Scriptures into Latin, issued a bull to declare it faultless; his successor, Clement VIII., would have his translation also, and he likewise declared this to be faultless: upon the collation, however, the two faultless versions have been found to differ in no less than 2000 places. Thus it is with every fallible man; and if it be so with translations of the written Word, what becomes of the certainty of tradition? It is surely the blind leader of the blind; "Can the blind lead the blind, do they not both fall into the ditch?" But again, your Priest, from whom you are to learn of tradition, may be sick, or old, or infirm, or indifferent, or indolent, or be called elsewhere; but your printed Bible is always fresh and vigorous, cannot sleep, or tire, and, what is of inestimable value, can be multiplied into as many copies as there are persons wanting it. Oh, my friends! awaken to the truth. The Almighty has given his Word to all; is it not, therefore, rebellion to that Word, to suppress it from any? The Almighty offers this gift to sinners; is it not taking part with sin and with Satan, to withhold this precious offering from your use?

This brings me to an assertion which is made by your Church; that what is written is not the entire Word of God; but that there are traditions which belong to and have been preserved in the R.C. Church, which explain the said Scriptures, and are equally with them, inspired. Now I shall not detain you very long upon this subject. It is plain that the Saints of your ancestors had no opinion, that the doctrines of salvation were to be

found in any, but in the written word of God. For this look again to the following passages from St. Bede. (Lib. iii. c. 4.) "They observed *only* those works of piety and chastity, which they could learn in the Prophetical, Evangelical, and Apostolical *writings*." My method has been, throughout, to try how ancient each practice, of which I speak, may be; and whether it is to be found in the first Christian Church of all, or not. And what does St. Paul say here? "Beware lest any man cheat you, by philosophy and vain deceit, according to the *tradition* of men; according to the elements of the world, and not according to Christ." (Colos. ii. 8.) And well might he say "beware"—for Jesus Christ himself thus speaks; "In vain do they worship me, teaching doctrines and precepts of men;" (Mark vii. 7 and 13.) "making void the Word of God by your own tradition." And here, my dear fellow countrymen, both ye who teach, and ye who hear these things, consider how awfully the great book of Revelation closes—"If any man shall add to these things, God shall add unto him the plagues written in this book;" (Rev. xxii. 18.) and what are these plagues? "The pool of fire and brimstone, where both the beast and the false prophet shall be tormented day and night, for ever and ever." (Rev. xx. 9 and 10.) Oh! let us beware; and anxiously "search the Scriptures," to discover who indeed are those false prophets among the people, (2 Pet. ii. 2, &c.) who "shall bring in sects of perdition," bringing upon themselves swift destruction;" "through whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of." My friends, when did this doctrine of traditions begin? Does St. Chrysostom think them indispensable,* when he writes thus of the Scriptures? "Hear how he," (meaning St. Paul,) requires you "especially to read the *Scriptures*; nor do you look for any other teacher; you have the oracles of God, no one teaches like them." It is here to be remarked, that Pope Gregory the Great affirms*, that the book of the Maccabees is not canonical; and he therefore excludes it from the Scriptures. I shall return to this point,

The dispute respecting the authority of the unwritten word of God, as it is called, being equal to the revealed Scriptures, has been put to the decision of a verdict of twelve men, by Archbishop Usher; and surely such a jury was never impanelled since the days of the Apostles themselves; and when I mention their names, I defy the theologian of any sect to challenge one individual amongst them; they are—Tertullian, Origen, Hippolytus, Athanasius, Ambrose, Hilary, Basil, Gregory Nyssen, Jerome, Augustine, Cyril, and Theodoret.

* Expos. Job i. 12, c. 17.

I cannot detail their opinions at length; but the learned will find them in the places mentioned in the note.* Some of them, however, I shall beg leave to transcribe. Origen says—"In the two testaments, every word that appertaineth unto God may be discovered and discussed; and all knowledge of things out of them may be understood. But if any thing remain which the holy Scriptures doth not determine, no other third Scripture ought to be received, for to authorise any knowledge." St. Ambrose says:—"The things which we find not in Scripture, how can we use them?" "It is well," says St. Hilary, "that thou art content with the things which be written." St. Basil—"It is a manifest falling from the faith, and an argument of arrogancy, either to reject any point of those things that are written, or to bring in any of those things that are not written." St. Jerome declares: "As we deny not those things that are written, so we refuse those things that are not written." St. Augustine says:—"In those things which are laid down plainly in the Scriptures, all things are to be found which appertain to faith and direction of life;" and, again, "Whatsoever ye hear from the holy Scriptures, let that savour well unto you; whatsoever is without them, refuse, lest you WANDER IN A CLOUD;"—and St. Cyril says—"That which the holy Scripture hath not said, by what means should we receive, and account it among those things that be true?"

I have already quoted St. Chrysostom, and might still add others; but shall confine myself to a very few of the most striking testimonies, such as that which was delivered in the name of 318 fathers of the first general Council of Nice, A. D. 325.—"Believe the things that are written; the things that are not written, neither think upon, nor inquire after." This is the opinion of a general Council; (see their acts). Now it is material to observe, that it is a thorough condemnation of whatsoever the sons of the wise, as St. Jerome expresses himself, (in Hag. c. 1.) "find out and fain to have received, as it were by tradition from the apostles;" and which he declares, "The sword of God doth smite," or his word condemn: all addition of authority to the New Testament, in the shape of inspired note, or comment, is clearly considered, by all these writers, as arrogant and impious; and, among the condemned traditions which are tacked upon the Old Testament, we must

* These references are copied from Usher's Answer, p. 37 to 40.—Tert. adv. Hermog. c. 22.—Orig. in Levit. Hom. 5. Hipp. T. 3. Bib. Pat. p. 20. Athan. orat. cont. Gent. Amb. Offic. lib. i. c. 23. Hil. l. 3. de trinit. & Lib. 2. ad Const. Aug. Basil. Hom. 29. & de fide, &c. Greg. Nys. de animâ. T. i. p. 639. Hieron. adv. Helvid. Aug. de doctr. Christi l. 2. c. 9. & de Pastor. c. 11. &c. Cyr. in Gen. l. 2. Theod. Dial. i. &c. &c.

certainly place the Apocryphal books, which the Roman Catholic church considers as being canonical and inspired: Pope Gregory the Great differed from the present received opinion, as to some; and none of them were allowed to be revealed in the Council of Laodicea, A. D. 364. St. Jerome says, (Prefat. in lib. Salom. Ep. 115.) "The church doth read indeed the "books of Judith, and Tobias, and the Maccabees; but doth "not receive them for canonical Scripture."

We need not better authority; to come, however, nearer to our times and home, an Irish divine, who lived about the year 677*, says, in speaking of the same book of Maccabees, that in it, "however some wonderful things be found, yet will "we not weary ourselves with any care thereof;" and so of the other books which we call Apocryphal; and why does he neglect them? "because these things have not the authority "of divine Scripture," or the rest of the written word. How much less then must they have valued, in those times, unwritten, and, therefore, uncertain and vague traditions. The first time that traditions and apocryphal books were publicly put upon your church, as necessary articles of faith, and equal to the written word of God, was, when they were declared to be so by a decree of the Council of Trent, in the year 1545; but, in truth, to admit traditions to be of equal force with the written word of God, is to suppose a most strange impossibility, to wit, that tradition cannot be false; whereas the slightest observation will prove to you, that nothing is so deceitful, and that traditions of the same event differ in different families. To conclude, my dear friends, you have a right to satisfy yourselves, whether, upon the whole of this great subject, the Scriptures do; or do not warrant the decree of your church abovementioned—"search, therefore, the Scriptures daily, "whether those things are so;" and, when doing so, direct your attention to the following additional texts—1 Tim. iv. 7. Tit. i. 14. Gal. i. 8. Deut. xii. 32. and Is. viii. 20.

As so much has been said, of late, respecting the reading of the Scriptures by the ignorant Roman Catholics of this country, I may be allowed, very shortly, to add the testimony of a few of the most respectable, and pious, and learned of that persuasion, to the propriety of putting them into your hands, freely and liberally; leaving it to that God, who inspired them, to adapt their healing doctrines to the wants of each of you. See the commentary of the learned † Erasmus, a Roman Catholic, on the first Psalm, where he says, "Let "private persons also read the law of the Lord, every one in "his own language," &c. "But now there are some who think,

* Usher's Religion of the Ancient Irish, p. 10.

† Taken from the Dublin Indicator of May, 1820.

"that all imaginable care should be taken lest the common people should, at all, read the sacred Scriptures, in the vulgar tongue; they cry out, the common people have no intelligence, they will fall into heresy; as if indeed the doctrine of Christ were of that kind, that only a few theologians could understand it. Nay—as no one was more plain and simple than Christ himself, so nothing is plainer than his doctrine." "Cannot the Spirit of Christ impart himself to whom he pleases? into whom is he more wont to descend, than into the humble, and the meek; not into him who is swollen and haughty with a false persuasion of his learning; not into him who confides in captious sophistical intricacies?" and so on—again, "But truly I fear, that they who wish the people to be excluded from the word of God, are not impelled so much by a sense of the danger to them, as by self-interest, and self-love; namely, they wish that every thing may be sought from *them* as from oracles." If you want authority from a Pope, take it from the very last; the venerable Pius VI.—and remember, if you suppose infallibility to belong to his predecessors, you have no right to deny it to him; from whence it is plain, that the letter which is pretended to have been written by his successor, must have been falsely translated, wherever it contradicts his predecessor—Writing thus, "to his beloved son Anthony Martin, of Turin," so lately as the year 1778, he says, "Beloved Son, health! &c. In such a number of publications which grievously injure the Catholic religion, and which, by the hands of the unskilful, are circulated to the hurt of souls, you judge wisely in thinking it needful to stir up the faithful servants of Christ, to the special *reading* of the *words* of God; for they are the richest fountains, which ought to be open to *every one*, that he may draw from thence holiness of manners, as well as purity of doctrine; and thereby overthrow those errors which are so widely disseminated in these corrupt times. This you affirm to have been done by yourself, in publishing these Scriptures in our mother tongue; THEREFORE, we applaud your well-known learning, and eminent piety; and, as is just, thank you for the books you have transmitted to us, which we will read speedily if possible. In the mean time accept our Apostolical benediction, which we most lovingly impart, as an evidence of our pontifical regard for you."

This, my fellow countrymen, is warrant sufficient; here is the permission, and moreover, the authority of the Pope, for you to read—go on then, and prosper; and, if any man attempt to prevent you, address them in the words used by St. Peter himself:—"If it be just, in the sight of God, to hear you rather than God, judge ye." (Acts iv. 19.)

From the Prefaces to several Roman Catholic versions of the Scriptures into the French language, printed at Paris, in the years 1719, 1728, 1731, 1732, and 1735; and from other sanctions which are replete with approbation of the written word of God being disseminated among all classes of society, I shall extract a few of the most remarkable, and which chiefly ground themselves upon yet greater authority, I mean that of the fathers of the church.

From the sanction of M. Pinsonat, Doctor of the Sorbonne, Lecturer, and King's Professor, Royal Censor of Books, &c.—“Too much labour cannot be spent on these kind of works; they may be so useful to the faithful, and to the rich, as well as the poor, since neither have any other rule for their conduct, than the same Gospel. And the wish of the sacred writers, and the holy fathers, has always been, to feed both with the words of eternal life.” We read, in several of St. Jerome's letters, that he put the Holy Scriptures into the hands of all the women who were under his care; we see, even in his answer to Gaudence, who had consulted him about the education of his granddaughter, that he wished children should be made to read and learn it by heart, even from seven years old. St. Chrysostom made several discourses to prove, that this study was, in some degree, the duty even of those who had the meanest capacity; and, that they might not attempt to excuse themselves from it, by saying the holy Scriptures are difficult to understand, he maintains, that there are things in them suited to the level of every creature; so that a tradesman, a servant, a poor woman, every one in short, even the most ignorant, may profit by reading them: for which reason, this great saint exhorts all his hearers, not to cease to do so; and to be no less anxious to have the holy Scriptures in their houses, than the instruments of their trade; because, said he, they cannot otherwise secure their salvation—*Non potest fieri ut quisquam salutem consequatur æternam, nisi perpetuò versetur in lectioni spirituali.*—Sermon 3d. de Lazaro.” “It is in the holy Scriptures, said St. Augustine, one finds the remedy for all the maladies of the soul; and it was apparently with this view that, in writing to Antonius, he directs him, not to lose any opportunity of urging the study of them upon his wife, in order that she might advance more and more in the fear of God. Again, St. Gregory the Great said: Do not neglect the sacred Scriptures, they are epistles which our Creator addresses to us, to warm our hearts, and to prevent our love towards him from abating, by the coldness of impiety. St. Césaire, Bishop of Arles, did not even excuse

"those who were unable to read, for being totally ignorant of
 "the Holy Scriptures; for, said he, if, without knowing how
 "to read, they learn profane songs, by hearing them sung, or
 "hearing them repeated to them, surely they could likewise
 "learn the sacred Scriptures, by having it read to them. It
 "was thus that St. Servile learned it; who, though a beggar,
 "and paralytic, saved, from the alms which he received, suf-
 "ficient to purchase a copy; and, by hearing persons who
 "went to see him read it, he acquired, says the great St.
 "Gregory who has written his life, a perfect understanding
 "of it. The pious author of the Imitation of Jesus Christ,
 "makes a comparison between the Holy Scriptures and the
 "holy Sacrament, and says, positively, in the eleventh chap-
 "ter of the fourth book, that the one is no less necessary to
 "render this life supportable, than the other. We shall say
 "here, by the way, that as Christians are not deprived of the
 "bread of the holy Sacrament, although they do not under-
 "stand the mystery of it, or because the unworthy profane it;
 "so the study of holy books should not be forbidden them,
 "because they do not understand them, or because some evil-
 "minded persons make a bad use of them*." Edition, 1728.
 "After having given a portable edition of the New Testament,
 "for the benefit of young people, we have thought it right to
 "publish this one, in beautiful large new types, more correct
 "than the preceding ones, to enable persons of both sexes,
 "who are more advanced in years, or whose sight is weak,
 "to draw with greater ease the clear and living waters, from
 "the springs of the Saviour". Edition 1731.—"It was to
 "commend this practice of reading the Scriptures, that St.
 "Jerome pronounced, so judiciously, this oracle, *which the*
 "*† church has made a rule of the canon law,* 'that to be
 "ignorant of the holy Scriptures; is to be unacquainted with
 "Jesus Christ," Edition, 1732. "Nothing better proves the
 "admirable zeal of all the first Christians, for the reading of
 "the sacred Scriptures, than what passed when the enemies of
 "the faith determined to declare war publicly against the word
 "of God. The edict of the Emperors having been published,
 "they appointed commissioners to make a strict search for the
 "Holy books, throughout the whole empire; the commis-
 "sioners made great heaps of them, and burned all they
 "could seize; they were not content to confine their search
 "to the churches, or the houses of lecturers, but they ex-
 "tended their inquiries, in a cruel manner, to the dwellings of
 "private persons: for, say historians, the laity, as well as
 "others, had the holy Scriptures in their houses, read them
 "diligently, and even knew them by heart. Trade's-people,

* See the extracts from these Prefaces, translated, and lately edited.

† The Roman Catholic Church.

“commonly had them in their shops; children, and servants,
 “perused them, as others, or heard them read daily in their
 “families; travellers, and soldiers, carried them with them;
 “women read them also; and we learn, by the history of some
 “female martyrs who were put to death, only on account of
 “the firmness with which they kept that sacred book, and of
 “others who, seeing themselves obliged to leave all, and es-
 “cape to caverns, only regretted these books which they had
 “no longer the consolation of reading, night and day, as
 “heretofore. It is thus that holy Scripture, and the Gospel,
 “formed the whole treasure and consolation of the first Chris-
 “tians; and they would have given up their lives, rather than
 “allow this sacred book to be torn from their hands. When
 “they had it not, they had nothing; and, when they were hap-
 “py enough to possess it, in whatever degree of poverty they
 “might be, with it they possessed all things. Let us endea-
 “vour to circulate, and cause it to bring forth fruit every
 “where—let us imitate the zeal of the first Christians, and
 “particularly St. Quadrant, and his associates; although lay-
 “men, they travelled through several countries, to announce
 “Jesus Christ to those who had not heard of him; and they
 “put into their hands, the sacred book of the Gospel, says
 “St. Eusebius; who relates further, that St. Pamphilius, a
 “priest, brought copies of the holy Scriptures, in great num-
 “bers, which he distributed with joy to men and women,
 “whom he knew to be inclined to the reading of it.”

Were I to extract the opinions of all the ancient Fathers,
 in favour of the general circulation of the holy Scriptures, I
 should extend this tract too far; I shall therefore close this
 head, with referring to the practice of the celebrated Leander
 Von Ess, a strict Roman Catholic, who has himself, in the
 course of the last very few years, distributed not less than
 408,000 copies of the sacred word, throughout the German
 empire; and who still continues this blessed work, under the
 patronage of all that is great and learned in that part of Eu-
 rope. I could add many testimonies of ancient German di-
 vines, in favour of the same great object, contained in the
 prefaces to translations of the Scriptures into their native
 tongue, and which have been furnished to me by a friend;
 but to do so would keep me too long from my main subject.
 They, may, however, be found in a German compilation of
 authorities upon this subject, which has been published by
 Leander Von Ess.

CHAPTER VI.

OF PURGATORY.

FROM what has been said respecting the religious opinions and practices of the ancient saints of this Holy Island, it is already apparent that they were very different, in many respects, from those of the modern Roman Catholic Church; and, therefore, that the opinion and practices of the latter are so far innovations upon the old religion of the country. This matter is of much importance, I must therefore request of the reader to bear with me yet a little longer, while I shew that they were yet more different in some matters, in which the salvation of souls is, perhaps, farther concerned. My fellow-countrymen will surely allow me some share of their national candor, and natural intelligence, in an inquiry of such consequence; especially when they must be persuaded, that I can have no earthly motive for writing this, but zeal for the glory of God, and love for my fellow creatures.

The religion of the Bible teaches, through the lips of St. Peter himself, (Acts, iv. 12.) that "there is no other name" "under heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved," but that of Jesus Christ alone; "neither is there salvation in any other:" Christ says, that he only is the way, and the truth, and the life;" (John xiv. 6.) and he himself hath declared, "no man cometh to the Father but by me." St. Paul sums up the doctrine in a few words, that "by grace you are" "saved through faith, and that not of yourselves." (Eph. ii. 8.) Now the word of God, by teaching this doctrine, fully and exclusively declares those opinions to be innovations upon simple and primitive Christianity, which put forth, in any shape, that human merit can at all satisfy the justice of God, or add any efficacy to the work of him whom God sent into the world, "that the world may be saved by him," (John iii. 17.) who alone is the great "propitiation for the sins of the people," (Heb. ii. 17.) "and who is able to save for ever them that" "come to God by him"—(Heb. vii. 25.) for "we are sanctified" "by the body of Christ once offered," (Heb. x. 10.) Indeed it is arraigning the wisdom of God to suppose this; for, if man could have been saved by any thing short of the sacrifice upon the cross of the Son of God himself, the all wise Being would not have sent his Son to suffer, and to die for us. It is insulting the wisdom of Jehovah to suppose that any paltry sacrifice of man could purchase that, for which the Almighty Redeemer's death was the necessary and stipulated ransom; and this an ignominious death, attended with excruciating suffering, with drops of blood, with the agonies of the cross; nay, further, a close to a life replete with all the miseries

and degradation of the lowest state of human existence, and the extremest poverty; (see here Isa. lii. 14. and Ps. xxiv. 14. to 19.) aggravated by all the spiritual sufferings of one who possessed a most tender and passionate heart, and who was betrayed, denied, deserted, in the hour of utmost need, even by the most favoured of his chosen. The sole merits of Christ, my friends, form the life and spring of the Christian religion; we must trust in God's mercy through Christ Jesus, and in that alone; and we assert that those doctrines go quite against the pure teaching of Him who says, "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice," (Matt. xii. 7.) and that "the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanses us from all sin," (1 John, i. 7.) which declare that man can satisfy God's wrath by his own sufferings, either in a purgatory out of this world, or by penance in this world, or by the merits of any other human creature, whether living or dead, save those of the incarnate God. Let us look to the opinions of your ancestors in those matters.—St. Columkill directs us to "live trusting in God, and following the Commandments of Christ,* while life remains; and while the time wherein we may obtain salvation is certain;" and speaks of the preparation of eternal torments for such as live without God in the world; (in Epist. 4.) should they die without repentance: He also says, in a hymn, which is thus translated, in his *Life by Smith* (p. 140)—

"The sentence past, consuming fire shall seize

"The unbelieving:"

and St. Patrick himself, in a book ascribed to him by your church†, writes thus—"there be three habitations; the first, the lowermost, and the middle; the highest whereof is called the Kingdom of God, or the Kingdom of Heaven; the lowermost is termed Hell; the middle is named the present world." And again, "In this world there is a mixture of the bad and of the good together, whereas, in the Kingdom of God, there are none bad, but all good; but in Hell there are none good, but all bad." In his Confession, also, he speaks of the awful sentence of that day, when all shall give an account, even of their most trivial offences, before the tribunal of Christ the Lord.—Well, my friends, is purgatory mentioned here? The only time for obtaining salvation, is this life, says St. Columkill; there are but three habitations, Heaven, Hell, and this world, says St. Patrick—but spare your astonishment yet a little, and hear the Canons of your

• "Vive Deo fidens, Christi præcepta sequendo,

"Dummodò vita manet, dum tempora certa salutis."

Epist. ad Hunaldum. Epist. 5. Vet. Epist. Hibern. Sylloge.

† De tribus habitaculis.

church, passed long before the Reformation took place in this country*, the soul being separated from the body, "is presented before the Judgment seat of Christ." Sedulius, therefore, (in 1 Cor. iii. and Rom. vii.) distinctly declares that "death is the gate by which we enter into our kingdom;" and that, when life is ended, "either death or life succeedeth;" or, in other words, the state of a spiritual and eternal death or life immediately commenceth: and Claudius† is the reader of the entire, in these words, "Christ took upon him our punishment without the guilt, that, thereby, he might loose our guilt, and finish also our punishment."‡ Such are the views of your ancient saints, with respect to the mansions of the other world, and the state of departed souls; still stronger do they shew that they did not hold the doctrine of Purgatory, in the texts; whereby they, both indirectly and directly, condemn the practice of praying for the dead; a practice which was first introduced when Purgatory was invented, because it was taught, that the sufferers in Purgatory would have the benefit of a shortening of the time of their suffering and confinement, through the influence of the prayers of the faithful; but Claudius, of whom I have spoken before, did not think so, when he reminds us, "that, while we are in this world, we may be able to help one another by our prayers, or by our councils. but, when we shall come before the tribunal of Christ, neither Job, nor Daniel, nor Noah, can intreat for any one, but every one must bear his own burden.†" Upon this point hear also the decisive opinion of St. Patrick, expressed in the XIIth Canon of his Synod:§ after quoting the awful and mysterious words of the Apostle, as you will find them in 1 John, v. 16, he proceeds thus—"And our Lord" (says) "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, for," (says the Canon) "he who was not worthy to receive the sacrifice in his life time, how can he be assisted by it after death?" With such authority I think I may conclude this point, for can there be any higher of this description, or more positively, or clearly put forward;" the words in the original are thus:—"Et Dominus 'nolite donare sanctum canibus;' Qui enim in vita sua sacrificium non merebatur accipere, quomodo post mortem illi potest adjuvare." But, perhaps it will be said, that all these quotations are partial, and do not tell the whole truth, because that books, as well as very ancient tradition prove, that there has been, from time immemorial, in an island of Lough Derg, a place called Patrick's Purgatory, which is now the most holy place of pilgrimage in Ireland; and has been so since it was made holy by the great St. Patrick, as the office

* Usher's Religion of the antient Irish, p. 24.

† Comment on Gal. 3.

‡ Claud. in Gal. 6.

§ See his second Synod in Wilkin's Spelman's Concilia.

and liturgy of Sts. Patrick, Columb, and Brigid declare to you. My friends, I know this place right well; and bear with me a little time longer, while I tell you some truths about it, which may make you to know it better than you do. In the first instance, none of the ancient writers of the Life of St. Patrick, make any the least mention of it—Nennius, A. D. 858, and Probus, who lived in the year 731, and wrote the Life of St. Patrick, not omitting even the most trifling circumstance, do not notice it; and Jocelin, his great historian, who is very particular, and lived in the year 1183, even at that late period has not said a word of this place, which is now of such mighty consequence and fame; and it is quite impossible it could have been then notorious as it is now, and be passed over in such silence by this author. You will find the first mention of St. Patrick's Purgatory in the works of a writer of the year 1153, to wit, Henry, a monk of Saltrey: this was above 700 years after the time of St. Patrick, and was but a few years before Jocelin lived; and the stories belonging to it were so manifestly full of lies, that this latter historian, if indeed he ever heard of it, never takes any notice of the invention. In the next century the place became a little more important, and celebrated abroad; but what proves beyond all doubt, that until lately it was not held, either by your writers, or by your clergy, to have been a place of any great sacredness, is the following fact which I copy from the Ulster Annals, which are written by an Irish Roman Catholic—“A. D. 1497, the Cave of St. Patrick's Purgatory in Lough Derg,* was demolished in that year, on St. Patrick's day, by the Guardian of Donegal, and some persons in the Deanery of Lough Erne, deputed by the Bishop, by authority of the Pope.” Now, my friends, you know as the Pope is deemed by you to be infallible; there is an end of the matter; and, if your clergy continue to encourage your going on pilgrimages to this place, I suppose it is because they never heard of this Pope's command; if they had, they would surely have obeyed it, for I am not willing to suppose that they keep up a trick for any improper purpose. I think, however, it is clear, that St. Patrick and his purgatory have nothing in the world to do with each other; and it is also clear, that we cannot trace any connexion, either in his works that are extant, or in his Canon between him and a doctrine which teaches, that there is a place for souls between this world and Heaven, where they are prepared for the latter, and out of which they can be delivered by the prayers of persons who are paid for it. This is indeed, a doctrine, my friends, which is neither to be found in the old religion of the Scriptures, or in the old religion of

* See, also, Richardson's “Great folly of pilgrimages in Ireland,” p. 43, &c.

your ancestors. The word of God declares that *after* death comes not purgatory but the judgment,—“it is appointed unto men once to die, and, *after this*, the judgment.” (Heb. ix. 27.) Our Saviour tells the thief upon the cross, one who was condemned to death for his crimes, “This day thou shalt be with me in Paradise,” (Luke xxiii. 43.) for Christ preached not purgatory; well knowing the all-sufficiency of his death, and that, “by one oblation, he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified;” (Heb. x. 14.) and he also tells us, ~~that~~, at the last day, when he shall come, in his glory, to judge the world, he shall separate the wicked from the Just; “and these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the just, into life everlasting.”* (Mat. xxv. 46.) And when, my friends, is this to take place? in the hour when “they that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that have done good things shall come forth unto the resurrection of life; but they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment.” (John v. 28 & 29.) Here we find the true doctrine of our ancient saints, which I have shewn you already, that the first passage from the grave is to the last Judgment, and thence, immediately, into the place of unchangeable doom, the mansion of Hell, or the mansion of Heaven. And here it may be important to remark, that we are not to expect that we should meet with, in the works of your ancient saints, any direct denial of the existence of a purgatory; for, what was not then taught, they could not, of course, allude to. Their opinion respecting it can be only deduced from their view of the future state of souls after death; and their silence altogether concerning this newly invented place, proves the truth to be, that the doctrine of Purgatory was not thought of for a long time after the apostolic age. Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, an English Roman Catholic Martyr, confesses that it was never, or seldom, mentioned by the ancient Fathers.† Alphons. de Castra, another great authority of that church,‡ allows that it was unknown to early writers, never mentioned by the Greek fathers, and not at present received in that church; while Hugo Etherian,§ admits, that prayers for the dead are not to be met with in the Scriptures; nor can even Bellarmine himself discover a

* See here the following texts:—Ps. vi. 5. Eccles. xi. 3. Is. xxviii. 18. &c. lvii. 1. & 2. Luke, xvi. 22, 23. & 25. John, iii. 36, & v. 24. Acts, iii. 19. Rom. viii. 18. &c. 1 Cor. iv. 17. xv. 51. &c. 2 Cor. v. 1. 2. &c. 1 Thess. iv. 14. &c. And Rev. xiv. 13. and throughout the last chapters.

† In confutat. Luther. Art. 18.

‡ Adv. Hares, L. 12. Tit. Purg. f. 238.

§ De regressu animarum.

Some of these quotations are at second hand, from Usher's Answer.

text that favours it, except in the Maccabees ; so of several others of your church, who thought, agreeably to the very strong expression of Bishop Fisher, " That there is not one " text of Scripture that can force any man to believe in pur- " gatory." The doctrine, however, although not apostolical, is to be met with very early in the Roman church ; but it was rejected, as I have said, by the Greeks, and openly condemned, as we have before seen, by St. Patrick : the first mention of it that is connected with Ireland, I find in a letter in Usher's Sylloge, the 30th Epistle, written in the year 1090 ; and I believe it was not publicly established, even in the Roman Catholic church, until the year 1430, by Pope Eugenius in the council of Florence. And now let us consider, for a short time, the reasonableness of the Doctrine that it inculcates ; it is, indeed, an egregious folly to suppose, that human creatures, were there even such a place as purgatory, could become purified there, or make a gradual progress in it towards that state of holiness without which no man shall see the Lord—and why?—there can neither be saints or good men there, and none but sinful persons are its inhabitants ; now, if we find that, even here on earth, where there is a mixture of good and bad, and where we have our clergy, and good example and precept to assist us, we yet become every day worse and worse, until stopped in our course by the grace of God, and brought to contrition and repentance ; will it be possible for us to be reformed in purgatory ? the priests can certainly give no help, for they will, it is hoped, be in a better place ;—but, perhaps, you suppose that people will be changed, and awakened, by supernatural things which they shall meet with in this awful abode. One of the Proverbs is extremely applicable here—" Though thou shouldest bray a fool in a mortar, among " wheat, with a pestle, yet will not his foolishness depart from " him." (Prov. xxvii. 22.) Oh no ! the misery of a purgatory might break the obstinate heart of rebel man, but it could not soften it ; nothing but the dew of God's grace can accomplish that, nothing but the fire of his spirit can melt it. Attend to Jesus Christ himself upon this point : " If they hear not Moses, " and the Prophets, neither will they believe, if one rise again " from the dead." (Luke xvi. 31.) Oh, then, my fellow-countrymen, listen to the word of God ; hear it saying of the dead in their sins, " between us and you there is fixed a great " chaos, so that they who would pass from hence to you, " cannot, nor from thence come hither." (Luke xvi. 26.) believe him who shews you, that his grace alone can save, " without me you can do nothing ;" (John xv. 5.) and I should suppose that it never has yet been taught that his grace is to be found in purgatory. To what then does it come ? That

the prayers of the clergy are what will redeem you thence. Be it so—Permit me, now, to make just two observations here, upon the absurdity of this; which will also shew you at once why this doctrine is preached to you—the clergy are to redeem you by their prayers, at a certain stipulated price; it follows, then, that the rich have the best chance to get to Heaven soonest: what then becomes of that blessed message of free pardon, which he who became poor, that you might be made rich, preached to the poor? (Luke vii. 22.) or of the great difficulty which, the same Gospel tells us, stand in the way of the rich, of those who serve Mammon, and lay up their treasures upon earth? Did Christ ask for payment? Oh no! Whereas they had not wherewith to pay, he forgave them both; the debtor of 500 pence, and the debtor of 50. (Luke vii. 42.) But, secondly, the clergy are to redeem you by their prayers; why then not give them to you freely? Do they really believe that there are thousands, even of their acquaintance, suffering inexpressible torments in a lake of fire, whom they can release entirely, or for many years, by prayer alone; and do they grudge this prayer, until they are paid for it? What conclusion are we to draw from this? A penny will purchase their intercession; but, without money no prayer; “no penny no pater noster,” is a well known saying in your church. What conclusion are we to draw, I say, from all this, not surely that they who offer Christ’s gospel freely to all, are the enemies who sowed the tares in the island.

St. Patrick, my fellow-countrymen, as well as the inspired writers of the New Testament, seems to have had the probable event of such degeneracy in view, when, in his confession, he gives his own conduct as a guide for others, in respect to the free communication of spiritual blessings. Presents had been offered to him in abundance, but he refused them all, “lest he should give any the least ground to unbelievers for scandal or reproach.”* And again, “I know that poverty and affliction suit me better than luxury and riches, for even Christ the Lord was made poor for us.”

Not only, indeed, was Christ made poor for us, but he, in no instance, refused his spiritual graces to the poorest that sought him; and St. Paul also, his great Minister, formed a just model, upon which St. Patrick thought it right to fashion his conduct—he toiled for the salvation of souls; in prisons, in dangers, in stripes, in perils of every kind; “in labour and painfulness; in much watchings; in hunger and thirst; in fastings often; in cold and nakedness:” (2 Cor. xi. 23, &c.)

* “Nec, etiam in minimo, incredulis locum darem infamare, vel detrectare.”

he was "made all things to all men, that he might save all:" (1 Cor. ix. 22.) he took pleasure "in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ;" (2 Cor. xii. 10.) exclaiming, "Woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel!" and "what is my reward then? that preaching the Gospel, I may deliver the Gospel without charge, that I abuse not my power in the Gospel." (1 Cor. ix. 16. and 18.) And what is this Gospel? "even the justice of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all, and upon all that believe in him, being justified *freely* by his *grace*, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." (Rom. iii. 22. and 24.) the salvation is here freely given; the redemption or purchase, is the blood of Christ, the benefit of which is to be had without price; and it is not reserved for those who can pay for it, but "he that will, let him take the water of life, freely." (Rev. xxii. 17.) "Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he hath no money, come ye buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk, without money, and without price,"—ineffably sweet and gracious invitation! Oh, my fellow countrymen! why are you so dull? "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness; incline your ear, and come unto me," saith the Lord Jehovah; "hear, and your soul shall live." (Is. lv. 1, 2, and 3.)

I am not here to be understood as objecting to a liberal payment of the clergy for the discharge of their several duties; such a mode of argument would be altogether unscriptural, for it is written, that "the labourer is worthy of his hire." (Luke x. 7.) But I oppose and lament the existence of a doctrine which gives out spiritual graces by measure, in the proportion of the ability to pay for them, as being in the highest degree unscriptural and disgraceful; equally against the practice, and the doctrine of the Apostles, and entirely contradictory to the precepts of your ancient teachers and spiritual pastors, from St. Patrick to St. Richard, his successor to the See of Armagh, who wrote, and preached, with incessant zeal, against the covetousness of the clergy of the Roman Catholic church, such as it was in his day.

This, indeed, had increased to an enormous extent at the time of the Reformation. I shall conclude the subject, by quoting the authority and the words of a well known writer,* upon this point—"By a system of confession, the Church intruded upon the sacredness of private life—and established

* Mr. Southey, in his *Life of Wesley*, vol. I. p. 311.

"it, as a principle, that, by these worthless works, a man might not only secure salvation for himself, but accumulate a stock of surplus merits, which were disposeable by gift, or sale. Men were easily persuaded, that, as the merit of good works might be bought, so might the account for evil one's be settled, by pecuniary payment, and the rich be *their own redeemers!* Every thing on earth had long been venal, and the scheme of corruption was completed, by putting the kingdom of Heaven at a price."

CHAPTER VII.

OF PENANCE.

It is the habit of the Roman Catholic church, when a person has confessed his sins unto it, to ordain that, in order to appease the wrath of God, and of course to satisfy his justice, the person so confessing shall undergo a penance or punishment in his body, for what he has done wrong. This punishment of the body has been of late years changed, in most instances, into a punishment of the purse; or, as I have seen it remarked, *penance* has been turned into *pence*. Of the first kind, the punishment of the body, I shall say a few words, with regard to the practice of your ancestors, and that of the apostles, and of the primitive church. We have a canon still existing, which passed in a synod that was holden in this country by Saint Patrick, in the year 450. This canon ordains thus: "a christian who hath killed a man, or committed fornication, or gone unto a soothsayer, after the manner of the Gentiles, for every of these crimes shall do a year of penance; when his year of penance is accomplished, he shall come with witnesses, and *afterward* he shall be absolved by the priest." Now observe the nature of this penance, my friends. As man cannot read the heart, and is easily deceived by outward professions, this synod required good proof of the sincerity of the repentance, proportioned to the atrocity of the case, before it allowed the priest to absolve from the crime; but the pardon thus conveyed was never supposed to be merited by the penance, or to be purchased by it; the canon said, he shall take a year to prove that he is sincere in his sorrow, and he may then be received back by the church; but it by no means implies, that any sacrifice he could make was of any effect to satisfy the justice of God.†

† Lest there should be any mistake about the doctrine of Penance, as received in the Roman Catholic Church, I quote the following from its

Suffering and fasting, for the purpose of subduing pride and the lusts of the flesh, are far from being condemnable; and penance in this shape very frequently appears, not only to have been practiced by the primitive christians, and by your ancient saints, but is recommended by the Scriptures themselves. Humiliation such as this is approved of in the confession of St. Patrick; and that heartfelt contrition which leads us, like the publican, or the prodigal, to cry out for mercy—repentance in dust and ashes, self-abhorrence and loathing for iniquity—are pleasing to God. “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God! thou wilt not despise.” (Ps. li. 17.) Such are, indeed, of the very essence of repentance; and the Roman Catholic clergy, when pressed hard upon the use of the word penance, in their version of the word of God, declare that, in their view of its meaning, it is the same with the repentance of which I speak. If this be really so, we cannot quarrel with them on this point; for, that repentance is necessary to salvation is clear from all the Scriptures—“Repent, and believe the Gospel,” (Mar. 1. 15.) is not only the declaration of our Saviour, but the great subject of Christian preaching. But it is a doctrine of quite a later invention, and foreign from the nature of repentance, to suppose that, by any mortification of ourselves, we can add any the least portion of assistance to the cross, as a means of salvation, or as a sacrifice for sin.* “For, it was fitting that we should have such an High Priest, (as Christ,) “holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily, (as the other priests,) to offer sacrifices, first for his own sins, and then for the people’s, for this he did once, in offering himself;” and again, “by one oblation he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.” (Heb. x. 14.) This great sacrifice, we see, was not only full and sufficient, but needed not repetition, for God declares of those who are redeemed, “their sins and iniquities I will remember no more; now,” (says St. Paul,) “where there is remission of these, there is no more an oblation for sin.” (Heb. x. 17. and 18.) The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth from all sin; “He is able also to save for ever, them that come to God by him;” (Heb. vii. 25.) therefore it is “that no flesh should glory in his sight.” (1 Cor. 1. 29.) What an insult is it, indeed, to the Majesty on high, to suppose that a worm,

Catechism, p. 52. “By Penance,” as a sacrament, “we receive forgiveness of those sins committed after baptism;” and, in order to receive it in a good state, the person is, among other things, “to satisfy God in performing the penance laid on him by the Priest.”

* See the Epistle to the Hebrews throughout, particularly vii. 2. G. 7.

a being formed of the dust of the earth, could add any thing, of even the most trivial value, to the price of such a ransom. Contemptible sacrifice! "Hear, Oh my people! and I will speak."—"I am God, even thy God;" "if I were hungry, "I would not tell thee; for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof." (Ps. 1, 7, and 12.) Let man remember that he, and all that he can offer, is already the Lord's. Oh! plume not yourselves, therefore, in any thing you can acquire, or possess, or surrender; but give to God the glory, "knowing that you were not redeemed with contemptible things, as silver or gold, from your vain conversation of the tradition of your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb unspotted and undefiled;" and remember how contemptible are the best sacrifices of man—"all flesh is as grass, and all the glory thereof as the flower of grass; the grass is withered, and the flower thereof is fallen away; but the word of the Lord endureth for ever." Thus writes St. Peter himself,* the very oldest and the very best authority. The life of man is as grass, and perisheth with a day—what then would the sacrifice of even that life signify, in the scale of redemption, when thrown in to add weight to the sufferings and to the death of Christ? to think it any thing, is not only absurd, but impious, as I have before said. Can we suppose that the Son of God would have descended from the perfect glory, and majesty, and happiness on high, where he who created the stars was blessed for ever, to become a poor, despised, rejected, suffering, crucified mortal, and thus to bear the punishment of sin, if it were possible for justice to be satisfied by any mortifications which man could meet with on this earth? If they could have sufficed, it would have been an easy thing for the Almighty to have made this life more miserable to man than it is, and to have put patience into his heart to bear, nay courage sufficient to court this misery:—and, surely, an eternity of glory would have been well worth such a purchase; but no—it was necessary that the Son of God, in the form of a sinless human creature, should make the full atonement. In his mercy he has done it; and now so far from sending man to mortification, he has proclaimed—"Come to me, all ye that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you; take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, and you shall find rest to your souls; for my yoke is sweet, and my burden light. (Matt. xi. 28, &c.) I have said, that God might have put it into the hearts of men, to suffer a life of mortification in the hopes of an eternal reward, if such a plan could have done any thing towards procuring it; let not this surprise, for

* 1 Pet. I. v. 18, 19, 24, & 25.

even Satan himself has found means to enable mortals to bear with such a life, under this deceitful hope. There are numbers of poor heathens who have spent their days in a state of torture, in the hopes, by this means, to appease the wrath of God; and the very worst that any poor contrite Roman Catholic sufferer has ever inflicted on himself for his soul, to assist the agonies of his Saviour in purchasing its redemption, sinks to nothing when compared with what the poor Indians do every day, to avert the displeasure of their gods the work of their hands, wood and stone: not to dwell upon their sacrificing their very lives, by putting their heads to be crushed into atoms under the chariot wheels of Juggernaut, upon the great day of his procession, and numberless similar instances even of self-immolation.

But this is only the teaching of Satan, who loves to glut himself in the blood of his votaries. The gospel of Christ is free and preaches better things. It is not the blood of bulls or of goats that it requires, nor yet the blood of man; but, as God's justice is now satisfied by the great atonement, he "will have mercy, and not sacrifice—" (Matt. xii. 7. see also Heb. x. 5. &c.) And why? "the Author of salvation" is made perfect "by his passion," (Heb. ii. 10.) and this "being consumed," he became, to all who obey him, the cause of "eternal salvation;" (Heb. v. 9.) nothing meritorious could be added thereto by man, nor could it, without impiety, be attempted by him. This is the teaching of the first Christians, and also of the saints, whom your ancestors so highly revered: the contrary doctrine has, I confess, been a long time taught in Ireland, but yet it is an innovation; and your clergy err when they tell you that repentance means, in the mouth of the disciples of Christ himself, any punishment inflicted upon yourselves, by which you can indulge the hope of turning away from you the just vengeance of God, which is denounced against sin.

I cannot quit this point without placing before you a most instructive passage of Scripture—the people of Israel, being faint in the wilderness for want of water, Moses struck the rock in Horeb, and water gushed from it, freely and inexhaustibly, for their use. This is considered to be a type of the piercing of Christ upon the tree, from whose wounds a rich and inexhaustible supply of heavenly grace has been poured forth, for the need of the weary and heavy laden sinner, who comes to him for refreshment—now look to Numbers, Chap. xx.; you will find there the people once again murmuring for water, and God commanding Moses to *speak* unto the rock, and that a supply of water should flow. "And Moses lifted

"up his hand, and, with his rod, he *smote* the rock twice; he smote it, in disobedience to the command of the Lord, who had told him only to speak to it, in faith. "And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel; therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them." Thus was this holy lawgiver, the favoured man, "whom the Lord knew face to face," (Deut. xxxiv.) condemned to die in the wilderness, and never to see the holy land, for not believing the Lord; for incredulously attempting to mix something of his own with the great plan of his God. If then Moses was thus punished, how can we expect to escape, if we attempt to accomplish the great purposes of grace, by a second smiting, when the one great wound upon the tree has opened the free stream of unmerited grace; instead of looking with an eye of faith upon the cross, and claiming the benefit of the promise?

Had I time to dwell upon it here, or were this the proper place, I would gladly address a few words to my fellow-countrymen of the Protestant Church, upon the alarming extent to which the doctrine of penance forms the ground of their hopes of mercy at the last day, with very many who are not conscious of their resting thereon. How many of the poor exclaim that "they trust in the Lord, that they have been sufficiently afflicted for their sins by the miseries of their lives!" How many of the rich sit down, self-contented, and self-righteous, when they have sacrificed, from their purse, to the poor, or done penance by not gratifying some craving desire! How awfully frequent does the nominally orthodox build his house, his eternal habitation, upon the sandy foundation of self-sacrifices and human merits; instead, of that only sure Rock of ages, Christ the righteous; that "tried stone," and "sure foundation," which Jehovah has laid in Zion. Isa. xxviii. 16.

CHAPTER VIII.

OF THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS, AND THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

BUT, my fellow-countrymen, by far the most awful of those innovations which have been made upon your old religion, is that which has introduced the invocation of saints, and prayers to the Virgin Mary, into your worship; and which considers her intercession, and that of departed men, to be grounds of mediation between you and God. Let us see what was the practice

of your ancestors; and endeavour to open to your eyes the right view of the subject, by shewing to you the fallacy of some observations; in defence of these practices, which are calculated to deceive you; and let us also search how the religion of the Bible teaches in this matter.

This opinion upon this subject of the ancient Britons, with whom, as I have told you before, you were closely connected in religion, is thus related to us, in an ancient chronicle which is preserved among some very ancient manuscripts,* and which informs us, that they lived in terms of tolerable peace with the Saxons, while these latter were Pagans; but, "after that, by the means of Austin, the Saxons became Christians, in such sort as Austin had taught them," the Bryttayns would not, after that, neither eat nor drynke wyth them, because they "were corrupted with superstition, ymages, and ydolatrie, the true religion of Christ." I have said that the religion of St. Patrick was purer than that of St. Austin, and this opinion is confirmed by what appears of the age, in relation to images. The twenty-third canon of his Synod declares, that "no creature is to be sworn by, but only the Creator:" and Sedulius, one of the most ancient writers of Irish birth, who lived in the same century with St. Patrick, gives it as a general law, that "to adore any other besides the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, is the crime of impiety;"† and, in words still stronger, "all that the soul oweth to God, if it bestow it upon any beside God, it committeth adultery,"—(a name which is given to idolatry throughout the Bible.) With still more particular strength, Claudius reproves the ingenious and worldly wits among the Heathen, for their foolish inventions of ways "how the invisible God might be worshipped by a visible image."‡ The Liturgy which is used by you now was not that of your ancestors; the present was first introduced about 700 years ago, by Gillebertus and other Legates of the Pope; and it is plain, from their letters, which exist and command its adoption, that, until then, it was not known in this island; one sentence among many will suffice, which I shall take from Bernard's Life of Malachias, or St. Malachy, who was one of the abovementioned legates—speaking of that person, and of Ireland, he says: "the customs of the holy Church of Rome did he establish in all churches; and hence it is, that at this day, (A.D. 1150,) the canonical hours are chaunted and sung therein, according to the manner of the whole earth; whereas, before that, this was not done, no, not in the only itself"—the city here mentioned

* Ben. Col. Camb. cxiv. Art. 175.

† Sedul. Com. on Rom. 1 & 2.

‡ Spel. Conc.

§ Cotl. on St. Matt. chap. 2.

is Armagh—the passage, and the places now quoted, put it out of all doubt, that the present system of prayers which is used by your priests is an innovation upon the old.

But, before I proceed to declare the practice of the primitive church, as exhibited in the New Testament, it is necessary to answer, as I have promised, some observations in defence of these practices, which have been so ingeniously contrived as to deceive you altogether on this subject. And I shall sum up, in one, the excuses for the use of images, &c. which exist in the Roman Catholic Catechism.—“Q. Why do we pray before the crucifix, and before relics, and images of saints? A. Because they enliven our devotions, by exciting pious affections, and desires, and by reminding us of Christ, and his saints,”—and commenting on this practice, a writer of your church has lately said, in defence of it, “By the doctrines of the Catholic Church we are taught to believe, that the veneration and invocation of angels, and of saints, are acts lawful, and advantageous to ourselves; and, by the same authority, we are also taught to believe, that, in those acts, there is nothing which can derogate, in any degree, from the honour that belongs to the supreme majesty of God; or which can be injurious, in any respect, to Christ’s character of mediator for man”—and, that every child is instructed, “that, when he prays to saints, it must be with dispositions of mind, and with an expression of language, which are essentially different from those which he employs, when the God of the saints is himself addressed.”* My friends, I shall not require more than the passages quoted here to prove, to what a deep and dangerous error, what a blind and awful delusion, this doctrine leads; for, besides that a distinction so nice can never be made sufficiently clear, besides that there is great difference of opinion, among the doctors of your own church, about what the nature of the distinction is, and therefore it can never be either understood, or observed by the common people, the Scriptures make no such distinction—and here let me appeal to experience, and ask, does not the great difficulty that certainly exists in our enjoying communion with God in prayer, consist in this, that the world has too much possession of our thoughts, and Satan too much power of them? Who does not find this to be the case; and does not the putting before our eyes an earthly object, a creature, to engage the attention, increase the difficulty? When employed in devotion, if our eyes fix upon any particular object, our thoughts instantly wander away from God; and, if there be a painted window, or a ceiling covered with pictures of sacred scenes, they attract attention still more

* Letters by the Rev. J. Calderbank, 1814.

than common objects do; nothing but abstraction from outward things can fix devotion aright; and nothing is harmless to look on, but the book of prayer—so that, putting the worshipping of saints out of the question, I must conceive them to be an hindrance to prayer, instead of exciting “pious affections and desires.”

A short view of the oldest doctrines, which are those of the Scriptures, upon this point, taken in reference, both to it generally, and to the manner in which it is excused by its advocates, shall close my observations respecting it.

The following is the second commandment—“Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the waters under the earth; thou shalt not bow down thyself to them;” and so on. (Ex. xx. 4, 5.) But, how this clear and positive command, written amidst the thunders of Mount Sinai, with the finger of God himself, should ever have been left out of the inspired Book of his Word by your church, is a matter of great wonder; especially as it exists in every genuine copy that has ever been seen, that is not entirely modern. It certainly was not omitted by your ancestors; and whosoever it was that first thought of discarding it, your church is now so much ashamed of its having been left out, that it has been restored in many of your versions. Observe, now, my dear fellow countrymen, how clear and positive it is; and remember, that it is the express law of God himself. You shall make no image, not even of things in heaven; nor bow to it in worship—there is no use here of the distinctions of Latria, and Dulia, and such like inexplicable words; no puzzling terms; no vain allowance for “exciting pious desires.”—My friends, look throughout the Books of Moses in particular, and you will see, not only the danger of such practices, but the anxious cautions of God to mankind, that they should shun them, because of that danger. God had commanded two figures of cherubims to be placed in the tabernacle; they were not to be worshipped, but the matter was so mistaken by the people, that, even in opposition to Moses, they set up a golden calf to be their God, because the figure of an ox predominated in the cherubim: and, although severely punished for their folly, ten tribes out of twelve, and the entire nation that descended from them, took up this vile worship, and forgot the Lord their God; becoming, by degrees, worse and worse, until they provoked their God to cast them away from him altogether, at least for a period which has lasted until the present day. Again, Moses was commanded to raise up a brazen serpent in the wilderness; not as a God, but to try the faith of the people, and to serve as a type of Christ—they

had rebelled against Moses, and against the Lord; and poisonous serpents were sent among them, which he prayed should be removed. God, therefore, ordered this serpent to be formed, and that whosoever should look upon it, should be healed; and whosoever would not, should in his perverseness die: this was done to prove the implicit faith of the people in the word and promise of Jehovah: but, my friends, see the lamentable depravity of our nature, ever prone to depart from the pure worship of the only one God—this serpent became an object of adoration, and, although the pious king Hezekiah found it necessary to break “in pieces the brazen serpent that Moses had made, for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it,” (2 Kings, xviii. 4.) it is most strange to say, that it is even now given as an example, by the writers of your church, to justify them in their use of images; but consider this awful fact, that Satan has ever been busy, and ever will, to lead the world into idolatry by degrees. The worship, for instance, by all heathen nations, of the Sun, of their many gods, and of the numberless images by which they were represented, sprang out, for the most part, from the custom of endeavouring to “excite pious desires,” by placing before the eyes of the people something to remind them of the glory, and of the other attributes of the great Creator of the world. The degenerating character of the heart of man, gradually thus losing the feeling and recollection of what was referred to, and becoming engrossed by the image alone. The worship of the only true Lord Jehovah was known to Adam, and to Noah; their descendants put up images to do honour to God, in a manner too carnal; and their descendants again, entirely neglecting their origin, retained the images, while they forgot the Lord who made them. Such was the danger—and see the consequence, although the world was as well peopled at the time of the Deluge, as it is now, but eight persons worshipped God, in spirit and in truth—but eight persons of millions were preserved. The world again was well peopled in the time of Abraham; and still but one family preserved the pure worship of Jehovah; ten tribes of the children of Abraham went afterwards, in a mass, after golden calves and serpents, which at first, my friends, perhaps only excited “pious desires;” and now the church of Christ that calls itself the only Catholic, is desired by its clergy to follow the steps of all flesh in this dangerous practice. Your merciful God, therefore, aware of the danger of this fall, in his book that is written for your learning, and for your instruction in righteousness, in the xxiii. chap. of Exod. v. 32, 33. commands his people thus—“Thou shalt not enter into league with them,” the Canaanites, “nor with their gods; let them not dwell in thy

"land, lest they make thee sin against me." They neglected this command, however, and what was the result? We are told, in Genesis, that Rachel, the wife of Jacob, had taken away the images which her father worshipped, and hid them in her tent, in the hopes, as it is supposed, that he would serve the Lord when they were not to be found (chap. xxxi.); but see the danger of tampering with such matters, and how like a plague they infect all who touch them; but a short time passed before Jacob finds it necessary to say unto his household, and to all that were with him, "cast away the strange gods that are among you, and be cleansed."* With this view also, God commands his people—(Deut. vii. 25, &c. Douay version) "their graven images thou shalt burn with fire lest thou offend; neither shalt thou bring any thing of the idol into thine house, lest thou become loathsome," (See here Jer. xv. 2. 5. and the entire of Jer. xlv.) Such are the words of scripture; and, my dear friends, they are indeed too important to neglect. Accordingly the Israelites, when with humbled hearts they returned to their great Father Jehovah, and implored forgiveness for their vile idolatries, permitted the object of their idolatry, although formed of the precious metal of gold, to be ground into powder, and cast into the stream—(Ex. xxxii. 20. &c.) Let us, also, attend to this awful curse; and search the scriptures whether these things be so, or not.

Let it not be here said, that it is a calumny to assert of your church, that images are worshipped for themselves; its catechism, as authorised by the Council of Trent, will settle this point.—It teaches that "images of saints are put in churches, as well that they may be worshipped, as that, we being admonished by their example, might conform ourselves to their lives." Look also to the practice of every day among all the poor people of Ireland; a practice which Bellarmine,† fully authorises in the following words: "Images must be worshipped, not only as exemplars, but by themselves." I again repeat that I can admit of no distinctions of Latria and Dulia, which the poor people do not, and which nobody can well understand. God's command is universal, and far the safer guide; "neither shalt thou bring any thing of the idol into thine house, lest thou become loathsome." You must indulge me, as the subject is of such importance, both on account of the doctrine and of the authority, if I dwell a short time longer on the practical opinions of the oldest church, I mean that of the Apostles, respecting prayers to saints and angels, and the intercession of the Virgin.

* Gen. xxxv. 2. see also Judges, vii. 27. Josh. vii. 1. Judges ii. 2. & 3. and Deut. xii. 30. & 31.

† De Imag. lib. ii. c. 21.

The Devil, having tried to tempt our blessed Lord, throws out snares to the temper of pride, the sin by which Satan himself first fell; and offers to him the world, if he would but fall down and worship him—but our Lord replies to him thus: “The Lord thy God shalt thou adore; and him only shalt thou serve.” (Mat. iv. 10.) Cornelius, the first Gentile convert to christianity, when he saw St. Peter, fell down at his feet and worshipped him; “but Peter lifted him up, saying, ‘arise, I myself also am a man.’” (Acts x. 25, 26.) Oh, my friends! how would it become his successor to follow his great pattern in this example of humility! The Apostle Paul, and Barnabas, on performing a notable miracle at Lystra, were about to be adored by the people; but, when they heard thereof “rending their clothes, they leaped out among the people, crying, and saying, Ye men, why do ye these things? we also are mortals, men like unto you, preaching to you, to be converted from these vain things to the living God.” (Acts xiv. 13 and 14.) If these examples be said not to be to the point, because the Apostles were living persons at the time; they, however, afford us an acknowledgment, that, being men as others were, and of like passions with other human creatures, they could have no merits to share with their fellow sinners; for that, equally with all mankind, they were obliged to fly to the foot of the cross, and, humbled there in the dust, to cry for mercy, yea even for the sins of their holy things. But the scriptures equally condemn prayer to angels with that to saints—St. John tells us in his Revelations (xix. 10. & xxii. 9.) that he “fell down before his feet to adore him,” meaning the Angel of the Lord; “and he saith unto me, see thou do it not, I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren who have the testimony of Jesus; adore God.” Let me then, appeal to you in the words of St. Paul, (Col. ii. 18.) “Let no man seduce you willing in humility, and religion of angels.”* Oh, my dear friends! seek not to humble yourselves to man, however highly the man may be exalted in spiritual, or in temporal power; and dare not to worship any creature, how celestial soever;—“adore God.”

You will, perhaps, expect that I should make an exception in favour of one sainted person here, and question me thus; supposing it to be true that saints of a less high character are not to be thought of, in any manner, during our devotions; can it be denied that it must be wise and proper to make a friend of the mother of Jesus? and can it be supposed that she will not have influence with him, her son, in favour of those whom she loves?—My friends, look to the Bible. It is a very re,

* he note to the Rhemish testament clears this obscure sentence thus: “That is, by a self-willed, self-invented, superstitious worship.”

markable circumstance, that, very early indeed, people who revered our Lord, were inclined to think too highly of his mother. See Luke xi. 27. "And it came to pass, as he spoke these things, a certain woman from the crowd, lifting up her voice, said unto him; blessed is the womb that bore thee, and the paps that gave thee suck! But he said, Yea, rather blessed are they who hear the word of God, and keep it,"—expressly declaring that, not even his Mother, the blessed among women, possessed any divine privilege as such. And it is very worthy of observation, by the way, how highly the hearing of the Word of God is prized by our Saviour, in this text; surely those who refuse to spread that word among you, and yet teach you to pray to the Virgin Mary, have not sufficiently attended to this remarkable sentence, which, in a few words, condemns the overstrained veneration of your church for the blessed Virgin, and its unwarrantable jealousy respecting the great blessing of learning the word of God, which without hearing, you cannot keep. But, to return—the following text confirms this saying; and both together seem as if they were spoken by our Lord, in the spirit of prophecy, foreseeing the use which Satan might, in after times, make of her most peculiar situation, to set her up in the hearts of men as an idol of nations, and to crown her as the Queen of Heaven. In St. Mark we read thus (iii. 31, &c.) "And his mother and his brethren came;" "and the multitude sat about him; and they say to him, Behold thy mother and thy brethren without seeking for thee; and, answering them, he said, who is my mother and my brethren?" and looking round about on them who sat about him, he saith, Behold my mother and my brethren; for whosoever shall do the will of God, he is my brother, and my sister, and mother;" a doctrine agreeable to the entire of his teaching, that his faithful disciples should be his brethren, by adoption; that they should be thus entitled to call upon one common Abba, father! that they should be in him, and he in them, (John xiv. 20. & Eph. iv. &c.) by an union of a nature so condescending, as to be utterly incomprehensible to man. She who was chosen to be his mother, according to the flesh, was to be but his sister, and the sister of all his disciples in the spirit; while, like all flesh, she required, equally with the rest of our fallen race, a Saviour; and therefore she exclaims, "My soul doth magnify the Lord," and my spirit hath rejoiced in God, my Saviour;" (Luke i. 46 & 47.) and, though the Lord was with her, and she was indeed blessed among women, (Luke i. 28.) every passage of the Gospels which brings her into connexion with him demonstrates, that, so far from placing her in a situation of a mediator between man and him, he, with a kind of feeling of the necessity that a written authority should exist to check that

temptation hereafter, rejected her interference, in matters wherein his ministry was concerned—see here Luke ii. 41, &c, particularly v. 49.—Jer. vii. 18. & xiv. 17. In these latter texts we shall find, that the title of “Queen of Heaven,” which the Jews had given to some object of their idolatry, is denounced as offensive to Jehovah; and yet her worship is obstinately continued by them, alledging it to have been the practice of their fathers!

“There is one God, and one mediator, of God and men, the Man Christ Jesus,” says St. Paul (1 Tim. ii. 5; see also 1 Cor. vii. 5. & 6.) and mind how St. John, and the great head of your church, St. Peter, declare the same doctrine to the Jews, when speaking of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, (Acts, iv. 12.) “Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven, given to men, whereby we must be saved.”—These words of God prove that Christ is our only mediator with the Father. This may, indeed, be admitted; and, my friends, you will be told, that the use of the prayers to the Virgin Mary, and the intercession of saints, is to mediate with the Son; and you may, perhaps, be told that the words are, no name *under Heaven*, not excluding a name *in Heaven*—but St. John says, “If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the just,” (1 John ii. 1.) and in all the declarations of the Gospel, and the intercession for fallen man, there is nothing put forth but Christ alone—he who is “always living to make intercession for us,” (Heb. vii. 25.) and is able to save to the uttermost, or “for ever, them that come to God by him.” What other Mediator is named? and, if the apostles do not mention any other, upon what authority can it be said, that the doctrine of the intercession of saints can be the old doctrine of Christianity? Oh, my friends! they teach you an awful delusion who teach you so; remember this, that Jesus Christ was God and man; as a mere God he does not mediate, but as such he is himself one person in the mysterious Trinity, between which and man mediation is to be made: the Mediator is the Man Jesus Christ, who is a partaker of the nature of a man; this the entire Epistle to the Hebrews, especially ch. ix. 25. &c. and ch. x. 14. &c. demonstrates: the mediator could not have been an angel, who does not partake of our nature; he was necessarily, therefore, as you find it written, the sinless “man, Christ Jesus:” and the same text tells you that there is but *one* mediator. My dear friends, look about you in time, and fly to his everlasting arms alone—he will spread them beneath you; his “banner over you is love.” He has said, “Come to me, all you that labour, and are burdened, and I will refresh you. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart;

"and you shall find rest to your souls:" (Mat. xi. 29.) why, therefore, should you fear to approach him? He has said, "My grace is sufficient for thee;" (2 Cor. xii. 9.) why, therefore, should you seek for grace elsewhere? He came to call sinners to repentance—he came to preach the Gospel to the poor—he not, therefore, restrained by a sense of guilt, or of wretchedness, from coming at once to the fountain head of mercy, to Jesus, who has thus declared, "him who cometh to me I will not cast out." (John vi. 37.)

But, in truth, the doctrine is all of modern invention. Perren (de invoc.) confesses, that "he found no footsteps of praying to saints, either in the Scriptures, or in the Fathers, before the four first Councils:" and Bellarmine allows that they began to be invoked, not by law, but by custom.* Several other great Roman Catholic Doctors also admit, that such a doctrine is not mentioned in the Scriptures. Nay, even the Council of Laodicea,† in its 35th canon, forbids the faithful to call upon the name of angels. The use of images was again condemned by the representatives of the universal church, in the Council of Constantinople, A. D. 754, and this by the unanimous decree of 338 bishops, who commanded their removal; and, although the Pope confirmed the canon of the second Council of Nice, (so late as the year 787,) passed by only 150 bishops, authorising image worship, the English Catholic church rejected it, writing a book to condemn it, and sent it, in the name of the Princes and Bishops of England, to Charlemagne of France.‡ This prince, who had been led to object to the use of images, partly by arguments drawn from the Scriptures by our great countryman Alcuinus, who was then a bishop in his court, held a council at Frankfort, A. D. 794, at which he condemned the above-mentioned canon of the Council of Nice:§ so that it was not until the year 787 that image worship was taught in the Roman Catholic church; and,

* Beatt. Sanctorum. Lib. 1.

† It asserts that Christians ought not to forsake the church of God, and depart aside, and invoke Angels; now, as it awfully declares thus—"if any man, therefore, be found to give himself to this *privy idolatry*, let him be accursed;" it behoved the advocates of image worship, and the invocation of saints, either to force, or to explain away an authority so powerful. They chose the latter means, and their manner of doing so is curious indeed. The word "angels" is "*angelos*" in the original; changing *e* into *u* converts it into "*angulos*," or corners; this change, therefore, was ingeniously made; and the *privy idolatry* which is now said to be condemned upon the authority of the canon, is *worshipping in corners*; so that you may invoke, without danger of anathema, as many angels as you will. See authorities in Usher's Answer, p. 471.

‡ Hoved. Ann. part 1. p. 405. Mat. West. ann. 793.

§ Henry's England, II. 148, 9, and his authorities there quoted; and note at end of the Chap. and Spel. Conc. 218, and 307.

it was only very partially received; and it was not until the ninth century that the second Commandment was first omitted.* This omission, Mr. Henry remarks, "shews that images, which had been introduced into the Church, as ornaments and helps to memory, were now become the objects of adoration."

Let me now put a plain question to your common sense—supposing that the prayers of saints to Jesus Christ could save you, and that your own prayers to Jesus can do it also, is it not safest to go to him at once? he will do the great business for you at the least as well; and you are sure of his interference, because of his promise: you cannot be so sure that your saint will intercede for you, as he has not promised it, or pledged himself to you. Besides, would not common sense bring you to the Prime Minister, if he promised an employment to you for only asking it; instead of going to a favourite clerk, who has pledged no promise, and may not be so favourably inclined; nor, after all, have a decided power to insure success. The doctrine, therefore, of the intercession of saints, is, to say the best of it, useless; because God is omniscient, and knows all our wants; is abundant in mercy, and is ever ready to relieve—so, what is the use of prayer to saints? It is, surely, but so much time lost; particularly as no intercessor, but Jesus Christ, can be every where present at one time; and the saint whom you may chuse to address, may not be in the neighbourhood to hear you; he may be, truly, with some greater favourite in Italy, or in Spain—and can you be certain that he to whom you pray, may not be displeased with you for doing so; agreeably with the assertion of St. Augustine,† that the angels are offended when they are worshipped.

I will just mention one absurdity, which is very striking, in the reason given for praying to St. Anne, the mother of Mary; it is because it is supposed that she can use authority with her daughter, who will then make interest with our Lord, as his mother; but, if this be allowed as rational, where is it to end? ‡ For the very same reason you should pray to the mother of Anne, and so to her mother's mother, and so on, (for there is no ground for drawing a line,) to Noah's wife, and thus to our

* Henry's England, Vol. II. 159.

† In Ps. 95. "Tum tibi irascitur angelus, quando ipsum colere volueris."

‡ See here Acts ix. 15. Rom. ix. 21. 2 Tim. ii. 21. 1 Kings vi. 21. Jos. iii. 5. and Ps. lxxviii. 23.

With regard to prayers which are offered up in a foreign language, for the people, they may think to excuse themselves from blame, because of ignorance; but so strict is the jealousy of God, that even sins of ignorance require an atonement. (Exod. iv. 1. &c. Num. vi. 9, &c.) for men should be cautious in matters of such importance. At all events, those who have been warned, ain with their eyes open, if they repeat the offence. The possibility of committing a dangerous error, by making prayers that we do not understand, proves strongly the impropriety of using any but the language of the people in religious services.

first mother Eve. The glaring absurdity of this is, surely, enough to condemn the practice altogether.

It is not necessary for me to dwell upon the superstitious veneration which is attached to the relics of saints, it is an error like to that of which I have been treating, and will yield with it to the truth; if we are persuaded to give up the adoration of saints, we shall readily be brought to lose our veneration for their relics.

CHAPTER IX.

OF THE CUP TO THE LAITY, AND TRANSUBSTANTIATION.

YOUR ancestors, the faithful saints of old, did not forbid the laity to partake of the cup, in the administering of the sacrament. The venerable Bede tells us, in his Life of St. Cuthbert, (c. 15.) that Hildmer, an officer of the King of Northumberland, sent for that saint to minister of the Lord's body and blood to his wife. Saint Furseus, or Fursey, in the seventh century, exhorts the pastors of the church to strengthen the souls of the faithful, "with the spiritual food of doctrine, and the participation of the holy body, and blood"—and, without multiplying quotations, the undernamed writers are amply sufficient to shew, that women in those days, did, as they express it, "enjoy the banquet of the body and blood of Jesus Christ, and drink out of the chalice."* In acting thus, your ancestors did but preserve the custom of the ancient Christian church, of

Few people in this country are aware of the extent to which prayer to the Virgin Mary has been abused abroad. The prayers of the R. Catholics here, address her, it is true, as "the Mother of divine grace," "the cause of our joy;" they make a creature to be the "refuge of sinners," instead of God himself; and, in actual despite of numerous texts already amply quoted, they substitute another advocate for sinners, in the room of the only mediator for fallen man, the man Jesus Christ the Righteous—(see Dr. Reilly's catechism) in the prayers of your church abroad, the virgin has been often requested to command her son; and, my friends, were I to lay before you all the blasphemy that has been uttered to her in various ages, I doubt not that you would be extremely surprised—two instances shall suffice—Bernardinus de Bostis exclaims; "But thou, O most graceful Virgin! didst not thou do something to God? Didst not thou make him any recompense? Truly, (if it be lawful to speak) thou in some respect, didst greater things to God, than God himself did to thee, and to all mankind: thou only didst sing, 'He that is mighty hath done to me great things; but I do sing, and say, that thou hast done greater things to him that is mighty.' The second is, that the text of scripture has been corrupted, to say, "come unto Mary," (instead of me, or Jesus Christ) "all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and she shall refresh you; and the Psalter of Bonaventure changes the last Psalm from "Praise the Lord," &c. to "Praise our Lady, in her saints; "Praise her in her virtues, and miracles!" Let this suffice to shew you what has been done. See authorities adduced in Usher's Answer, p. 464, &c. Cogitosus in vita Brigide, Ion. in vit. Burgundis. See also the collections of Capgrave, Surius, &c.—Usher's Religion of the ancient Irish.

the Bible, and of the Apostles; they had read and marked the Epistle of St. Paul where he speaks to the entire body of Christian converts with thus, "As often as you shall eat this bread, and drink of the chalice, you shall shew the death of the Lord, until he come;" (1 Cor. xi. 26.) and "Let a man prove himself; and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of the chalice;" (do. 28.) and they perceived that there was no exclusion here—they had observed how, in that chapter, St. Paul sharply rebukes the Corinthians for irreverence in their communion, in eating and drinking unworthily, and his rebuke is to all of the congregation, (v. 18. 21, 30, & 33.) and not to the minister, or to any particular individuals—but, above all, they had noted the awful words, by which this great sacrament had been instituted; and they found it thus spoken by the Lord himself, "drink ye all of this," (Mat. xxvi. 27.) "and they all drank of it;" (Mark xiv. 23, & Luke xxii. 19 & 20. 1 Cor. xi. 25. &c.) they had read also where he says, "he that eateth my flesh, and drinketh by blood, abideth in me, and I in him;" and yet again, in John vi. 54, 55, and 57, "amen, amen, I say unto you, except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you."

The practice, therefore, of giving the cup to all the people; not only existed among your ancestors, but was that of the times of the apostles, and continued unaltered for a very long period afterwards. Lanfranc,* Archbishop of Canterbury, in the year 1081, wrote thus to the people of Dublin, "We believe that it very much behoves all of every age, as well the living as the dying, to strengthen themselves by the participation of the body and blood of the Lord." The Pope Gelasius, who died in the year 496, declared, "that the Eucharist could not, without sacrilege, be received in one kind only."† Becanus, a Roman Catholic writer,‡ confesseth that, for 1400 years, the people might drink of the cup, if they would; and the Council of Constance, which first forbids the cup to the people, declares, in the very ordinance§ which makes this new regulation, that, "although Christ did minister this sacrament under the forms of bread and wine, and although, in the primitive church," (observe that, in the old, and first Christian church) "this sacrament was received by the faithful under both kinds; yet, from henceforth, it shall be given in one kind only to the people;" this was so late as the year 1415—the true history of it is, that, about this time, the doctrine of

* Epis. Hib. Syl. Ep. xxviii.—"Credimus enim generaliter omnes, omnibus ætatibus plurimum expedire, tam viventes, quam morientes, Dominici corporis et sanguinis perceptione sese munire."

† Ap. Gratian de consecrat. dist. 2. c. 12.

‡ "In manuali, de communione sub utraque specie."

§ Sess. 13.

transubstantiation began to be preached; and it was found out, by the Roman Catholic clergy, that, by giving the bread, they gave the flesh of Christ, and of course, in that flesh, his blood—this, I shall remark by the way, was a very bad reason, indeed, were it even founded in truth: for it would be just as strong an argument against giving the cup to the clergy; and to admit of it would be to suppose our Saviour to do a very vain and unnecessary thing, in commanding the use of the cup at all: besides, it destroys one great end of the sacrament, which is to continue the memory of his inestimable *bloodshedding*: but, far worse than this, it deprives you all, not only of the delightful and refreshing privileges left to you as a legacy, in the testament of a gracious Redeemer, but of all the benefits connected with a faithful obedience to his dying commands.—Oh, my dear friends! is it not a most awful thing to think, that no Romanist, unless he be of the clergy, has, since the time when this prohibition was first introduced and acted upon, received the holy sacrament; or fully obeyed the last solemn injunction of our only benefactor, our suffering and departing divine friend, “this do ye, as often as you shall drink, in commemoration of me?” (1 Cor. xi. 25.) Beware for the future; your former ignorance may be forgiven you by him who is long suffering and abundant in mercy, but he has said that, except you eat his flesh, and drink his blood, ye shall not have life in you; beware, I say, as future transgression upon this subject will be open rebellion against your God.

This error, I have remarked, took its rise in the doctrine of transubstantiation; which is a doctrine teaching that the bread and wine, given in the sacrament, are not mere emblems, but actually the body and the blood of Christ, into which they are converted by the ceremony of consecration. We find no trace of this opinion among the old people here; Sedulius in the year 490, speaks of the things offered in this Christian sacrifice, as being “the fruit of the corn and of the vine;” and calls them “the sweet meat of the seed of wheat, and the lovely drink of the pleasant vine:” and, to shew that he considered them to be exclusively emblematical, he says, “Melchisidek offered wine and bread to Abraham, as a figure of Christ offering his body and blood unto God, his Father, upon the Cross.*” “He left a memory of himself unto us, even as if one that were going a far journey should leave some token with him whom he loved, that, as oft as he beheld it, he might call to remembrance his benefits, and friendship.” The same views Claudius† had, when he says, “because bread doth con-

* Sedul. Carm. Paschal. lib. 4. Id. pros. lib. 4. c. 14. Sedul. in Heb. 6 and on Heb. 10.

† Clem. in Matt. lib. 5.

"from the body, and wine doth make blood in the flesh, therefore the one is mystically referred to the body of Christ, and the other to blood."

It is clear, then, that such was the way in which your ancestors construed the Scriptures upon this point. Before I state the period at which the new doctrine, now taught by the Roman Catholics, was introduced into Ireland, I shall take the liberty to mention a very few reasons, addressed to common sense, in favour of what your ancestors taught, before transubstantiation was dreamed of.

The first celebration of the Lord's Supper, which was by the Lord himself, could not have been the giving of the *very* body and *very* blood of Christ to the disciples; for actually he sat there in their presence, alive, and had not yet undergone the sacrifice of the cross.

Secondly, The Scripture speaks of Christ, as of one who "who needeth not daily, as the other priests, to offer sacrifices, first for his own sins, and then for the people's; for this he did once, in offering up himself;" (Heb. vii. 27.) "Now, where there is remission of these, there is no more an obligation for sin;" (Heb. x. 18.) it is also said, "that Christ, rising again from the dead, dieth no more;" (Rom. vi. 9.) see also particularly Heb. ix. v. 25. to the end.

Thirdly, To tell you that you eat flesh, when you feel that you eat bread, is such an imposition upon your senses, as never before was attempted; and he who will believe it, cannot hesitate to believe any thing, for he gives up blindly, to authority, the evidences of the surest guides which God has given him for his direction in common matters in this world. This has, therefore, been very properly said, by the celebrated Dean Swift, to be "a doctrine, the belief of which made every thing else to be unbelievable."

Fourthly, The words used, when it was instituted, were, as we have seen, "do this in commemoration of me;" Now, remembrance can have nothing to do with what is actually present; and therefore St. Augustin, in his third book of Christian doctrine, says, "to eat the flesh of Christ is a figure, teaching us to partake of Christ's passion: and to imprint in our memories, with delight and profit, that Christ was crucified for us." (C, 16.) He is himself in the heavens, although he hath sent his spirit to be the comforter of mankind; he will, indeed, come again upon earth, but not "until the times of the restitution of all things," as St. Peter himself declares; (Acts iii. 21.)

Fifthly, You are told that our blessed Saviour said, this is my body, and so he did; but this way of speaking is not to be taken literally: thus Christ calls himself "the door," and "the true vine; are we, therefore, to suppose him either the one

or the other, or both, or which? for examples of this manner of expression, I shall refer you to the first and last books of the Bible—in Gen. xli. 26, 27, it is said, “the seven kine are seven years;” in Rev. i. 20. “the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven candlesticks are the seven churches;” in both instances the word *is* stands for *represents*, or *are emblems of*; and thus it is with the same word in the institution of the sacrament. But, if we take the expression literally, let me ask you where will you stop? Christ says, “this is the chalice, the New Testament in my blood;” now, if we suppose that he means literally to say this is my *very* body, you must also take him to mean, this *very* cup is the New Testament in my blood; so that, when you drink, if you do not drink the *very* cup, you do nothing at all. It is, therefore, perhaps consistent to refuse you the use of it.

The doctrine of transubstantiation was first solemnly introduced into the church at the second Council of Nice, A. D. 787; there is extant a book which was written against it by command of the Emperor Charles the Bald, by Bertram, a Monk of the Abbey of Corbey, in the ninth century; and the discussions about it created so much dissension for some years after, that, in the year 1050, the Pope Leo the IXth, and the Bishops, assembled in the Synod of Vercelli, condemned the old opinion, together with the book of Johannes Scotus, who defended it. This person was so called, from his native country, which was Scotland; he was a man eminent for piety, talents, and learning, and the friend of Alfred the Great, whom he assisted in composing his Saxon translation of St. Gregory's Pastorals. Transubstantiation is denied by many of your most learned Doctors;* and even a Pope, one of the infallible heads of your church, affirms, “that the Elements cease not to be of the substance and nature of bread and wine.”† Three cardinals say, that it is not proved by the written word of God.‡ Erasmus confesses that it “was unknown to the ancients, both name, and thing.” (In. 1 Corinth.) It was not received in England until the eleventh century;|| but Ireland held out much longer, and we find Henry Crumpe, a monk of Baltinglass, even so late as the fourteenth century, declare, that “the body of Christ, in the sacrament of the altar, was only a looking glass to the body of Christ in Heaven§.

* See the authorities quoted by Usher, in his answer, &c. and Bower's lives of the Popes. An. 1050.

† Gelasius Papa de 2s. naturis contra Eutychem.

‡ Fisher de captiv. Babil. c. 10. De Alliaco. in 4 Sent. qu. 6. art 1. Cajetan ap. Suarez, Tom. iii. disput. 46.

|| Henry Hist. of Eng. ii. 180.

§ Ex actis Gul. Andreæ Mid. Epis. contra H. Crumpe, A. D. 1384. Ms. Usser. I wish here particularly to turn the attention of the reader to the passage in Leviticus c. xvii. v. 10.

CHAPTER VIII.

OF SOME OTHER DOCTRINES, ESPECIALLY CONFESSION, AND
INDULGENCES.

It would very far exceed the just limits of this address, were I to enter fully upon the original practice of your ancient pious men, with respect to all the innovations which have been made, by the Roman Catholic church, upon the primitive faith of the holy apostles and disciples of our Lord. I must therefore be contented slightly to notice a few. The sacrament of baptism was administered here in a different manner from that of the Church of Rome; for so Lanfranc complains to Tirdelvac, or Tirlagh, the king of Ireland, in the year 1089.* And Austin, finding this to be so in England, commands that the Britons "should perform the ministry of baptism, according to the custom of the Church of Rome." With these ancient Britons, we know the Irish assented; and Gildas tells us thus of their liturgy, that they were "contrary to the whole world, as well in their mass, as in their tonsure." These things I mention, not because they are so vitally material as some others; but because they demonstrate how very completely the practices of the Roman Catholic Church were the innovations of latter years.

Bernard, in his life of Malachy, is express in declaring, that this saint did first introduce into Ireland, about the year 1140,† the doctrine, that the ceremonies of confession, of confirmation, and of marriage, are sacraments of the church—he says that he did, "of the new, institute the most wholesome use of confession, the sacrament of confirmation, and the contract of marriage; all of which they," (the Irish,) "were ignorant of, or did neglect." With respect to the first of these, as connected with the pernicious doctrine of indulgences, and remission of sins, I would wish to enlarge. It is said by Aquinas, of the Scottish nation, that "none of the laity there will make his confession to his priest;" and that confession was made, publicly, not in the ear of the priest, appears from the life of St. Columbkille, where a penitent person is described to have "confessed his sins before all that were present;" as is the character of the very commencement of the Protestant service now. The practice of auricular confession, was not introduced into Great Britain, until the seventh century;‡ and then in express contradiction to the doctrines of the national church. It has been well remarked, that the custom demonstrates a very inadequate idea of the nature of

* "Quod infantes, baptismo, sine chrismato consecrato baptizantur." Epist. Hib. Syl. Ep. xxvii.

† Malachy died in 1158.

‡ Hen. Hist. of England, ii. 132.

sin; for, in truth, did a man know his own sinfulness aright, and that, as God has declared, "all the thoughts of their heart, "was bent upon evil at all times," Gen. vi. 5. (Douay version,) every man would require a priest for himself; and, were he to make his confession with truth, would busily employ that priest during the entire year. As for the distinction of venial and mortal sins, that would not come into his head, after having a right understanding of the spiritual nature of the commandments, as thus commented on by our Lord, and by St. John; (see Matt. v. 21, 22. and the entire of that chapter) "whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer," (John iii. 15.) and to look upon a woman with desire, is to commit adultery—for, in truth, it is grace only that prevents anger from ending in murder, or desire from ending in transgression—What then is to be done? one absurdity will always induce another, and so it is in all the innovations of men upon the plain gospel of Christ; and so it has been with auricular confession: and, as no priest has time to hear and absolve in detail a tenth part of the sins in his parish, he is compelled to put off the individual hearing thereof, and to give absolution by wholesale. (see here Psalm xix. 12.) I have said that the practice of auricular confession is quite modern; it was not commanded until the council of Lateran imposed it, in the year 1215, (canon 21;) and it appears from three of the greatest doctors of the Roman Catholic Church, Peter Lombard, the author of the sentences,* Gratian the compiler of the decrees,† and St. Thomas Aquinas‡ about a century before the council was holden, that it was at that time in our choice whether we would confess to God only, or to the priest also. But let the practice of confession be what it will, the material point is that of the remission of sins; and it becomes us well to consider it, in the order in which we have viewed some other great doctrines, as well because of its importance, as because of its enormous abuse; to which latter indeed we are indebted, under God, for the reformation of the Christian religion from the errors into which, through the agency of Satan, it had so deeply fallen.

It never could have been thought, by our ancestors, that St. Peter and his successors had the keys of heaven entrusted to them alone; for, as they were the disciples of St. John, and were steady to his teaching, they could not have believed that there was no absolution for sins except for those of the disciples of St. Peter: and accordingly they write thus—"the 'office' of remitting sins to the sincerely penitent, "is now "in the bishops and priests, committed unto every church,"¶—and how this is done is rightly explained in the same author,

* Lib. iv. Sent. Dist. 17.

† Grat. de Pœnit. dist. i. c. 89.

‡ In iv. Sent. dist. 17.

¶ Claud. in Mat. L. ii.

who, following St. Bede, says, "none can forgive sinners, but God alone; who also forgiveth, by them to whom he hath given the power of forgiving;"* and Sedulius agrees with this.† Their views upon this point were consistent with the Scriptures: and their doctrine did not vary from the old religion of the apostles, they saw that the commission to forgive sins was general, and given in the plural number; (John xx. 22, 23.) and‡ Christ said to them, "receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose sins *you* shall forgive, they are forgiven them," &c: they saw the same commission specially given to St. Paul, when he was sent among the Gentiles: (Acts xviii. 47.) they read the passages where St. Peter gives to God the glory thus, "knowing that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as gold or silver, but with the precious blood of Christ;" (1 Pet. i. 18, 19.) and therefore not to them did this other awful text of the same great apostle apply, "there shall be among you lying teachers who shall bring in sects of perdition,"—"and through covetousness, shall they, with feigned words, make merchandize of you." (2 Pet. ii. 1, 3.) A long time after the introduction of auricular confession, and penances, and other modes of absolving from sin, it occurred to the heads of your church, that it would be a thing extremely profitable for it, if the penance which it put upon sins were to be bought away, (as well as that the souls of sinners might be purchased out of purgatory;) it was therefore thought a very good thing to make "merchandise of you." Perhaps this first began with causing offenders to pay money for the use of the poor; for Satan is so subtle, as to *steal* in such practices upon men, instead of forcing them on them at once: a system of cunning which he has followed from the day of his first appearance, as the great equivocating tempter of Eve, to the present hour. But the selling of indulgences, which, in the natural progress of corruption, became a horrid impiety in the Church of Rome, was not known until the year 1096; or, perhaps, until the papacy of Alexander III, in 1160.§ Bishop Fisher confesses that indulgences are not ancient; and some of the most respectable writers of your church, acknowledge they are not known, either in the Scriptures, or in the writings of the ancient fathers. Some of the fathers define the power of absolving from sins in a manner perfectly scriptural, and very different from what is in practice now; St. Basil,|| for instance, says that it "was not absolutely given, but upon condition of the penitent's reformation;" and the holy St. Augustine, in one

* Claud. in Mat. lib. i.

† In Rom. ii.

‡ See also Ps. lv. 1.—Rom. iii. 24, 25.—Rev. xiii. 17, &c.

§ Scoppius de Indulg. cap. 12. || Reg. brev. qu. 15.

of his Homilies, says, "if thou givest all that thou hast, and dost not forsake thy sins, thou art twice deceived; both in losing thy money, and the pardon also."

I feel quite convinced, my dear fellow-countrymen, that the great majority of you never heard, and that very few of you really know, what a traffic was carried on at Rome, for many, many years, by the sale of these indulgences—and indulgences of what? indulgences granted to *sins*, which were thus remitted for money. At length the Pope Leo X. sent one Tetzels, as an agent into Saxony, to sell remission of *all* sins past, present, and to come; and not only those of the purchasers, but even of their deceased relations—"If any one," they said, "purchases letters of indulgence, his soul may rest secure, with respect to its salvation; the souls in purgatory, for whose redemption indulgences are purchased, as soon as the money tinkles in the chest, escape from torment, and ascend to heaven;"—and again, "for twelve pence you may redeem the soul of your father out of purgatory;" the absolution thus purchased was from all sins, "however enormous soever they may be;"† and this merchandize had such demand among the poor, blind, ignorant people of the day, that Tetzels boasted that he had saved more souls out of hell by the sale of them, than St. Peter—even St. Peter himself! had converted to Christianity by his preaching.‡ This money, it was well known, was applied towards the gratification of ambition, avarice, or sensuality. But people, my dear friends, could not long bear with this, and the practice became so scandalous at length, that it first induced Luther to oppose so unscriptural a merchandize; to wash away this stain from religion; and, by the reformation, to restore it to its original purity. Before I bring you to your own home, and to modern times, on this subject, it may be instructive to tell you, that there was a book printed and sold at Rome, for the information of poor sinners, which was called "the tax of the sacred Roman Chancery;" it specifies the prices of crimes; a few extracts will suffice you.

"For murdering father, mother, wife, or sister—ten shillings and six-pence!" "Dispensation to eat meat in lent, and on fasting days—ten shillings and sixpence." "For him that forgeth the Pope's hand—one pound seven shillings." "I shall add but one more: "for a priest keeping a concubine—ten shillings and six-pence!"

It may be said that these assertions are false; but the book is in print; it was published at Rome, in 1514; at Cologne, in 1515; and at Paris, in 1520, 1545, & 1625. It will probably be answered thus: these things may be true, but they are gone

* Hom. II.

† See the copy of it.

by. Without dwelling upon the infallibility and unalterable nature of the Roman Catholic Church, I will shew you, my friends, that such things are not gone by; and this by two instances, quite modern, and belonging to this country. There are in our College Library, among the MSS. two indulgences, which were purchased from the last Pope, Pius VI.; one of them was given to Edward Murphy, Esq. and cost, including the parchment, and the trouble of writing, and the expense of the handsome gilding with which it is ornamented, the sum of Sixteen Shillings and Three Pence; it not only absolves the said Edward Murphy, and all his relations within the third degree, from all their sins; but gives him power to include within his charter, any fifty of his friends at the moment of their departure from life; and all this for Three Crowns of Money!!! There is another similar Bull preserved in the same box. See MSS. Bib. T. C. D. E. 2. 19.

Doctor Moylan of Cork procured a Bull from Rome, granting to all those "who, after assisting eight times at the Holy Exercises of the Mission in the New Cathedral of Cork," which cost something to build, "shall confess his, or her sins," and so on, "a plenary indulgence, applicable to the souls in Purgatory," &c. Such are the instances near home, I have mentioned the Penny-a-week Purgatorian Society before.

You will find a most extraordinary instance of a Bull of this kind, relating to Ireland, in Vol. i. p. 462 of the State Trials, the Trial of Lord Maguire. By it "a full plenary indulgence and absolute remission of all their sins, is given to all Christians of the kingdom, in the year 1643, who will militate, or take up arms, and fight against the heretics and other enemies of the Catholic faith;" thus sanctifying bloodshed and rebellion. Another* Bull will shew to what a dangerous error it leads your souls, for it declares these indulgences and remissions of sins to issue from "the rich reservoir of atonement derived from the merits of the mother of God, the Holy Apostles, the Blood of the Martyrs, and the good works of all the Saints." We have spoken of these things in a former part of this address; but see, I pray, how the admission of one false doctrine drags in a long catalogue of errors. I shall conclude by remarking a curious inconsistency also, that the Popes, who thus dealt out indulgences and remissions so abundantly, required absolution themselves upon their death bed, which they received from their confessors; they would not die without it. It follows from hence, that, while they could remit the sins of others, they could not absolve themselves; although they had the keys of heaven, they were too weak to open the gates: they also had abundance of Masses

* Pope Ganganeli's in 1775.

sung for their souls ; therefore, they were considered as having gone, some of them at all events, into Purgatory ; of course, such of them at least as were there, were not infallible. It is thus, my friends, that a merchandise is made of your souls ; and that the water of life is strained out and filtered to you, which your ancestors distributed, gladly and freely, to the flocking people ;* and which your God invites you to partake of thus—" All you that thirst ! come ye to the waters, " and you that have no money : " (Is. lv. 1.) " the spirit and " the bride say, come ! " " let him that thirsteth come ; and " he that will, let him take the water of life *free cost* : " (Rev. xxii. 17.) but to you it is filtered, and you still will receive it so. " My people have committed two evils ; they have forsaken " me, the fountain of living waters ; and have digged to " themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water. " (Jer. ii. 13.)

CHAP. IX.

OF EXTREME UNCTION, FASTING, &c.

BUT I must pass on to a few more observations respecting our old and venerated Holy Men of this Land.

The first mention that is made of the Sacrament of extreme unction by any writer, Roman Catholic or otherwise, is in the fifth century : the instances of anointing which occur in the New Testament, in Mark vii. 13, and James v. 14, on which the Roman Catholic Church depend, were for restoring to health, and not preparatory to death ; and the Council of Florence ordains directly contrary to them, when it declares, that this Sacrament is not to be given to a sick person, unless his death be feared. The practice of anointing unto death is without precedent in the records of primitive Christianity ; but I have not met with any thing to inform me of how our ancestors treated the practice, save the following declaration in a letter of Gillebertus, or Gilbert, directing the practice of the Irish Church ; it was written A. D. 1090,† it precisely contradicts the directions of the Council of Florence, and says, " that " a believer may be annointed once, in any heavy disease, because the sacred unction not only ministers the cure of the " soul, but of the body ; " this unction, we see, is here given, with the full hope and expectation of recovery.

The practice which still continues, of refusing extreme unction to criminals who are under sentence of death, shews clearly

* Bede lib. iii. c. 26.

† Syl. Ep. xxx

that the cases in which your ancestors anointed were strictly conformable to those alluded to by the apostles, in the age of primitive Christianity—to wit, cases where recovery from sickness, was possible—were it otherwise, your ancestors would not have commenced the custom, which is now established, of refusing extreme unction to persons whose death was determined.

I shall now say a few words on the subject of fasting.—Abstinence from food is often recommended in the Scriptures; and was practised, both by Christians, and by their great master: the thing itself, *i.*, therefore, allowed; the manner and the motive alone are important. With respect to the first, the fastings of our ancient Saints did not consist in quality, but in quantity. Bede, speaking of the fasting of Ceadda, Archbishop of York, who was an Irishman, says, that he did “eat nothing but a small pittance of bread, and one egg, with a little milk mingled with water;” you see here, my friends, there is *one* egg, which is meat, instead of a rich turbot—abstinence, and not quality, made the fast; for not yet had been introduced the doctrines “forbidding to marry,” and commanding “to abstain from meats,” (1 Tim. iv. 3.). Again, the motive was the subduing of the flesh, and the procuring of that salutary state of mind, which a loaded stomach, whether it be with meat, or with vegetables, or with fish, is very much calculated to prevent. As for hoping to obtain, through such means, justification in the sight of God, or remission of their sins, such a motive seems to have been entirely unknown to them.

The rule of Columbanus ordains, (c. 5) “every day to fast, and every day to eat;” “because, this is true discretion, that the power of spiritual proficiency might be retained by abstinence”—again, “let the food of monks be mean, flying satiety and excess of drink, that it may both sustain, and not hurt them”—“the children of wisdom understand,” saith Claudius, quoting St. Augustin, “that neither in abstaining, nor in eating, is there any virtue; but in contentedness of bearing the want, and temperance of not corrupting a man’s self, by abundance;” agreeably with the reflection of St. Paul, (Heb. xiii. 9.) “It is best that the heart be established with grace, not with meats.” St. Paul also says of the old dispensation, it “is a parable of the time then present, according to which gifts and sacrifices are offered, which cannot, as to the conscience, make him perfect that serveth only in meats and in drinks, and divers washings, and justices of the flesh, laid on them until the time of correction;” but Christ being come, or the antetype of all this being arrived, the only establishment of the heart is by His

grace, who doth "cleanse our conscience from dead works, to serve the living God" (Héb. ix. 9, 10, 11, and 14.)—
 Finally, the author of the life of Furseus, and Gildas in his epistles, censure persons who, "being assaulted with spiritual vices, do yet neglect them, and afflict their body with abstinence;" and who, "abstaining from meats, which God hath ordained to be received with thanksgiving, fall to wicked things, as if they were lawful;" "such men's fasting," says Gildas, "unless it be proceeded to by some virtues, profiteth nothing at all." "they are, therefore, the better men, who do not fast much, nor abstain from the creatures of God beyond measure, but carefully keep their heart within pure before God, from whence, they know, cometh the issues of life; than they who eat no flesh; thinking themselves hereby to be, as it were, superior to others; upon whom, death hath entered, through the wounds of pride."* My friends, the use of fasting, with our ancestors, was to prepare the heart, and not to degrade the great atonement, so as to have a human sacrifice thus paltry exalted to a merit. I do not wish to detain you upon this subject longer, but will refer you, for truly spiritual instruction upon the subject of fasting, to Is. lviii. in which, the Lord declares, "Is this such a fast as I have chosen; for a man to afflict his soul for a day?" &c. "Is not this, rather, the fast I have chosen? loose the bonds of wickedness," &c. v. 4 and 5, *Douay version*.

Such do we find to have been the opinions of our oldest Church in Ireland, and of the oldest Christian Church of all, I mean that of the disciples of Christ himself, upon several doctrines of importance; it may be useful and interesting here, to shew their exact agreement with another old Church, which was said to be originally planted by St. Thomas. History informs us,† that the Portuguese under Vasco de Gama, in the year 1503, were surprised to find, in the interior of Travancore and Malabar in Hindostan, a Colony of Christians; and, being offended at their mode of worship, accused them in a Synod of the following erroneous doctrines, and practices—that their clergy had married wives; they owned but two Sacraments, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper; they neither invoked saints, nor worshipped images; nor believed in Purgatory; and had no other order and names of dignity in the Church than Bishop, Priest, and Deacon. This was very alarming to the Church of Rome—the Synod decreed that their books should be burned; and some even of these poor people were themselves burned, as heretics.

* See Wilkins' Concilia, v. i. 4.

† Buchanan's Asiatic Researches, 88, 89, and 90, and places quoted there.

by the inquisition at Goa. Some of them were compelled, at length, to acknowledge the supremacy of the Pope, and Pöpery to be the oldest religion! but, refusing to pray in Latin, or to give up their language and their Liturgy, except with their lives, they were allowed to retain these; after that their Liturgy had been somewhat altered. The churches of the interior, however, would not yield; they hid their books, and threw themselves upon the protection of the native princes.

Oh, my dear fellow-countrymen! were you to look into the history of your own native country, you would find it not unlike to this—you were early taught the pure doctrines of the Holy book of God; you were found teaching them, and practising them, by the Church of Rome.—She indeed had not, at that time, her inquisition; but, whatsoever power she possessed, that she used to bring you under her authority—this was, for the most part, acquiesced in; but, throughout the struggle, some few appear, at various times, who putting their trust in their heavenly God, “remained steady to the ancient faith; thus, even in 1377, your Primate St. Richard restored the Bible, and testified boldly to the truth, in the face of the Pope and of the College of Cardinals. Our misfortune, my friends, is, that our case is so buried in antiquity as to be generally unknown; were the things of which I speak of a date so modern as the history of the Christians of Travancore, it would then be manifest, who sowed the wheat, and who the tares in this island.

You have heard that your first teachers of Christianity were the immediate disciples of St. John—hear how St. Irenæus, one of them, complains, even in the second century, of Romish innovations, “that the Schismatics at Rome, had “corrupted the sincere law of the Church, which led to the “greatest impieties.” “These opinions,” adds he, “the “Presbyters, who lived before our times, who were also “disciples of the apostles, did in no wise deliver. I, who “saw and heard the blessed Polycarp, am able to protest, “in the presence of God, that if that apostolic Presbyter “had heard of these things, he would have stopped his ears, “and cried out, according to his custom, ‘Good God, for “for what times hast thou reserved me, that I should suffer “such things!’”* This Polycarp was the pupil of St. John, and the first teacher of the creed of St. Columbkil.

St. Jerom, one of the greatest authorities of the Roman Catholic Church, bears ample testimony to the high purity of the British Church in the fourth century, before St. Austin went thither, from Rome; and also to its independence, and sufficiency for salvation:† were we to inquire into what were the

* Euseb. lib v. c. 20 in Ledwich's Antiquities.

† Bishop of St. David's 2d letter, p. 8.

doctrines of our native primitive church, we should find that it was, at the least, equally pure; and, not only that no favourite doctrine of the present Church of Rome was holden therein, but that its confession of faith was truly Evangelical. The Monasticha of St. Columbkille* abound with precepts of Christian morals, and with exhortations to have faith in the Saviour alone, the same great foundation of religion, is laid down by every writer which I have consulted, as the only foundation. St. Patrick writes thus,† “they are not my words, but those of God, and of the apostles and prophets, who have never lied---He who believes shall be saved, but he who believes not shall be damned; God has said it.” Observe how well he understood the spirituality of the law, whose “letter killeth,” but whose “spirit quickeneth;” 2 Cor. iii, 6, “he who hateth his brother,” he says in his confession, “is adjudged as a murderer, and no murderer can be with Christ”---observe how he appreciates the unmerited grace of God, “I was,” says he, “as a stone in the deep mire; and he, the mighty one, came, and raised me in his mercy, and put me upon the top of the wall;” therefore, he declares, that he is bound to sing eternal praises to the Lord---“what shall I give to Him, for all he hath bestowed upon me? what shall I say, or promise to my Lord? because I see nothing that he has not bestowed upon me”---and, yet more particularly, observe how he sums up, in his confession, all the great scriptural exhortations to preach the Gospel of Christ to all men, which are to be found in Matt. xxviii. 19. Mark xvi. 15. Matt. xxiv. 1. Joel ii. 28, and Hos. ii. 23.

Such were the pious desires of this holy man, respecting the spreading of the knowledge of the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ among all the people of this land, for the purpose of removing the “idola and immunda,” as he terms them, the idols and uncleanness, with which he laments that it was polluted.

It may not be amiss to set before you a very short abstract of Christian faith, reduced into a more corrected order from the works of Sedulius, and of Claudius---they write thus.

1st. “All mankind stood condemned”---“with so just, and divine a judgment, that, although none should be freed from thence, none could rightly blame the justice of God;” “so that all the mouths of them, which would glory of their merits, might be stopped, and he that glorieth, might glory in the Lord.”‡

2dly. “The law was not given that it might take away sin; but, that men, by this means humbled, might understand,

* See Goldastus, p. 61, 65, &c.

† See his letter to Coroticus.

‡ Sedul. in Rom. ix.

"that their salvation was not in their own hand, but the hand
"of a mediator."*

3dly. "God hath so ordered it, that he will be gracious to
"mankind, if they do believe that they shall be freed by
"the blood of Christ:"† but, "by the works of the law, no
"man shall be justified."‡---"Not as if the works of the law
"should be contemned, and, without them, a simple faith
"be desired; but, that the works themselves should be
"adorned with the faith of Christ: for that sentence of the
"wise man is excellent, that the faithful man doth not live
"by righteousness, but the righteous man by faith."§ "This
"faith sticketh in the soil of the soul, like a root which
"hath received a shower; that, when it hath begun to be
"manured by the law of God, it may rise up again into
"boughs, which may bear the fruit of works; therefore, the
"root of righteousness doth not grow out of works, but
"the fruit of works out of the root of righteousness."||

In fine, for the matter of infallibility---"There is none so
"great, whom the Devil doth not dare to accuse, but Him
"alone, who had no sin; and who said, The prince of this world
"cometh now, and in me he findeth nothing"¶---and, as to
"the doctrine of human merit, they say, we are sanctified "by
"the calling of God, not by the merit of our deeds; ac-
"cording to the power that worketh in us, not according to
"our merits;"** and, "be it known, that all that men have
"from God is of grace, for they have nothing as of their
"due."†† Such were the doctrines of 1300 years ago; and
"thus did they lay the axe at the great tap root of all in-
"fidelity, and of false religion, the doctrine of human merit;
"which, planted by Satan in the rank soil of the corrupted
"heart of man, has thriven and flourished throughout the en-
"tire world, in all the full luxuriance of human pride. Until
"the root of this great passion, which was the cause of the
"fall of angels, and is that of the error of mankind, be de-
"stroyed, the heart cannot be turned to God in humble con-
"trition, and repentance, and faithful prayer; and sole and ex-
"clusive reliance on the merits and atonement of his son.---
"What is it makes men fly to penance? Pride, which sug-
"gests, that he can accomplish his own redemption.---What
"induces him to believe in a purgatory? Pride, which causes
"him to consider the great body of his sin as venial. What
"leads him to pray to saints, and to martyrs? Pride, which
"sets up confidence in the arm of flesh, as of power suffi-
"cient to save. There is an epitaph inscribed upon the mo-

* Sedul. in Gal. iii. † Sedul. in Rom. iii. ‡ Cl. in Gal. ii.
§ Id. in Gal. iii. || Sedul. in Rom. iv. ¶ Sedul. in Rom. vii.
** Sedul. in Rom. i. and Eph. iii. †† "ex debito," Sedul. in Rom. xvi.

namement of Father Edward Molloy, in a Chapel in the City of Cork, which is thus, "Sacred to the memory of the benevolent Edward Molloy, &c. &c. he employed the wealth of this world, only to secure the riches of the next; and, leaving a balance of merit on the book of life, he made heaven debtor to mercy:" the date is 1818---now, take the words of St. Patrick, written just 1300 years before this date, and judge which of the sentiments is the most just; the modern, or the ancient.*---"The apostle justly says, if the righteous *scarcely* be saved, where shall the ungodly, and the sinner appear?" The apostle whom he quotes, was St. Peter himself;† again, St. Patrick exclaims of himself, in his confession, "behold now, I commend my soul to my most faithful God, whose ambassador I am, in my *great unworthiness*"---here are St. Peter and St. Patrick, against Father Molloy. It was not until the time of the Council of Trent, about three hundred years ago, that the doctrine of the merits of good works was declared in your Church; and an ancient Pope, Gaius, or Caius, who died A. D. 296, has written, that the "Righteousness of the saints avails nothing to our pardon, or justification."‡ Such is the declaration of one, who is considered by you as an infallible guide---hear that of one more infallible still, the Word of God, as it is declared in the first Christian Church of all; "every one shall bear his own burden;" Gal. vi. 5. "we must all be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the proper things of the body, according as he hath done, whether it be good or evil;" 2 Cor. v. 10.---and Christ's own description of this awful day, in the end of the xxv. chapter of St. Matthew, entirely justifies this doctrine---it would puzzle the most ingenious, to find in these texts a place for hope, in his own case, from the charities of Father Molloy, or any of the saints, martyrs, or apostles---see also the 9th verse of the same chapter; Job xxii. 2, and xxxv. 7, Rom. iv. 5, and xi. 6, 1 Cor. iv. 7, Heb. x. 14, James i. 17; and, finally, the great saying of the Lord Jesus Christ himself, as it is recorded in Luke xvii. 10, "so, you also, when you have done all the things that are commanded you, say, we are unprofitable servants; we have done that which we ought to do"§---believe me, my friends, that neither

* See his letter to Coroticus.

† See 1 Peter iv. 18.

‡ Epist. decret. ad Felic. ap. Binium, T. i. p. 173.

§ The note in your version here is excellent, it is this, "Because our service is of no profit to our master, and he justly claims it as our bounden duty. But, though we are unprofitable to him, our serving him is not unprofitable to us; for, he is pleased to give, by his grace, a value to our good works, which, in consequence of his promise, entitles them to an eternal reward." Oh! si sic omnia!

St. Paul, the chief of sinners as he calls himself, or St. Peter, or St. Patrick would have dared to have brought in heaven *debtor*, in the least degree, on the side of mercy; because, as your old saints say, "all that men have from God is of grace, for they have nothing as of their own due."

To conclude, there is one general argument which presses upon my conviction with such force, to prove that the religion of the Irish Roman Catholic Church, is not the most ancient; and is so connected with the great point of ultimate reference to the Scriptures, that I wish particularly to press; the writing of holy Scripture, which we declare, "containeth all things necessary to salvation," ceases with the year of our Lord 96: The council of Trent, and the authority of the Roman Catholic church, receive tradition with the same veneration that they do the Scriptures, and upon tradition is every particular opinion of theirs founded; but this tradition does not begin until about the time that the writing of the Scriptures ended. Which doctrine, now, my friends, is the oldest of those two? that of the followers of the written, or of the unwritten word of God?—Another material point is, that we cut off the exuberances of the Roman Catholic church, and still leave enough for salvation; what that church teaches in addition to ours is, to say the best of it, unnecessary; for the Scriptures, that is God's *written* Word, are of themselves able to make all men "wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus." (2 Tim. iii. 15.) Such is the declaration of Saint Paul.

CHAP. XI:

CONCLUSION:

AND now I would request of you, my dear fellow countrymen, calmly, and seriously, and attentively, to consider and to determine, whether the Parable of the Husbandman who sowed the seed, and the enemy who scattered the tares, be realising in our days, in the manner that the Pope has stated in his letter, or whether there be any other period in your history, to which the parable would better apply. It is not the first time that the story has been applied to the British Isles and it is for your good sense to determine, which of the two is best justified in the quoting it as appropriate, the Pope now, or the great Welsh Bard Taliessin, who sung in the words which I quoted to you before.*

* It is curious to remark here, that Taliessin was not the only advocate against Romish innovation, who considered the Roman Catholic Church to be the sower of the tares—Archbishop Usher, in his answer to the Jesuit,

It is proper to remark upon another paragraph in that letter, from which you will observe, that the Pope has been mistaken in the facts, and been deceived by his advisers; it states, not only that the teachers in schools are Methodists, which you know is not the case with them all, but that they make use of Bibles rendered into English by the Bible Society, which is notoriously untrue; for the Bibles and Testaments, which are read there, and which are the only ones that the Bible or any School Society circulate, were translated into their present version, upwards of two hundred years ago—read the preface of any one of them to prove this. I have thought it necessary to remind you of this circumstance, because it will shew you, more decidedly than any thing else, that there is a great deal of mistake in this whole matter; and it will help, in the third place, to determine whom the prophecy of St. Peter will best point out, when he foretells thus—“And amongst you shall be lying teachers, who shall bring in ‘sects of perdition.’” Oh, my friends, that word “shall” was future indeed, when St. Peter wrote, but the time it refers to is at this present day, a time long past. Permit me now to ask, what can be the reason for attempting, at this particular period, to make such violent opposition to the attempts of good people, who endeavour to improve the intellectual and moral state of the poor in this Island? I would question you, has not the state of misery existing in it, proved that something must be done? and did not that state of wretchedness and ignorance continue to increase until of late years, when the measures now so strongly opposed were first entered into? I would gladly know, why the Pope, and some of your clergy, and of your laity also, have kept all their exertions in reserve to oppose Scriptural education, instead of assisting it? there has been a great progress of improvement, to this the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Tuam, bears ample testimony in his letter; and, therefore, as he must be conscious that it has arisen from the increase of schools, and the exertions of the gentry, how can he consistently object to the continuance of both? Besides, in the name of the God of all truth, I solemnly appeal to your understanding, to enquire what injury can possibly arise from your knowing the truth? much injury may arise from shutting up the Scriptures, and praying, in (p. 6.) addresses him thus—“You yourselves grant, that the seed which was first sown in this field, was good seed, and such as was put there by your master himself. If this which you call tares be no good grain, and hath sprung from some other seed than that which was sown here at first; I would fain know that man’s name who, was the sower of it; and likewise the time in which it was sown. Now you being not able to shew either the one, or the other, it must needs be that your eyes here deceive you; or, if there be tares, they are of no enemies, but of your master’s own sowing.”

Latin; and saying, "ask no questions, but take all we say for granted;" but none can happen from giving to you the book of truth, the revealed word of God, talking to you in plain English, answering every question which a concern for the salvation of your souls may induce you to propose, "and offering the Holy Spirit to guide into all truth." All Christians rest, my friends, upon the word of God and the merits of Christ; and, Oh! are they not at least as worthy of attention, as the tradition, the authority, of mortal sinners like us we are; or the merits of created beings, those even of our own vile, worthless, and fallen race?

I have dwelt much upon antiquity, my friends, because, in every way imaginable, your national love for the ancient customs of your ancestors has been appealed to, for the purpose of making you dislike the religion of the Bible, and those persons who profess it, and are anxious to put the Bible into your hands, not for the purpose of converting you to a profession of religion, under any one particular name, but to enable you to imbibe your principles of religion at the very fountain head; and to enable you likewise, under whatsoever denomination you are, to be the disciples of Christ, and of Christ alone.—But, after all, an argument founded on mere authority, is not a very reasonable argument; the Samaritans said, very foolishly, "our fathers worshipped in this mountain," (John iv. 21.) and seemed to be surprised that the Jews should have obeyed the command of God, by worshipping him in his own city.—Your priests give a reason exactly similar for excluding from salvation all who are not of their church; and by the way, they and the Samaritans are equally erroneous, in the very foundation of their opinions, and very similar in their error; for, in truth, the earliest fathers of the Samaritans adored the true God, in spirit and in truth, in his holy city; and yours were of the religion of the Bible, while the peculiar doctrines of Popery are, as St. Peter styles it, "vain conversation, received by tradition from your fathers," (1 Pet. i. 18.) But to return, if you must hold by the oldest religion of all, the first that was known to your ancestors, you would return to the worship of the sun, and of the moon, and to other abominations, the very mention of which would shock you, and which were used in Ireland long before the time of the first preaching of Christianity here—and, my friends, it would surprise you not a little to know, that you have still among you some practices which your priests have no objection to, but which your old saints condemn; which are older than Christianity itself; and which, of course, are heathenish. They are indeed the only part of your religious practice which can be called, with truth, the most ancient of all; because

they existed before the name of Christ was ever mentioned in the island: why they are permitted and encouraged by your clergy, being as they are, such outrages upon common decency in religion, they best can tell. I shall dwell on but one of these, I mean your pilgrimages to wells, which are common throughout Ireland. The superstitious veneration in which these places are held is well known; and there is scarcely a district in which there is not some well or other, which is dedicated to some patron saint, and decorated with thousands of rags; here prayers are said, and offerings made, and every thing done which is necessary to complete a perfect idolatry: these places, which are now dedicated to St. John, to St. Patrick, and other saints, were formerly sacred to Pagan gods, and, although the name of the patron is changed, the worship is but very little altered. But this was condemned most severely by our Irish and Saxon ancestors; and a canon in Edgar's reign strictly forbids these pilgrimages, under the name of well worship.* How St. John would have looked upon this preference of these wells to the fountain of the water of life, in which you might be baptised to an everlasting inheritance, I leave to you to judge. Our ancestors were certainly to blame that they did not destroy, at the very beginning, those rites of Pagan origin; their leaving of them was like the unwise and unfaithful conduct of the Israelites, who would not entirely destroy the idols of the land of Canaan, as they had been commanded to do; in consequence of which they afterwards proved to be "pricks in their eyes, and thorns in their sides." Num. xxxiii. 55. See also the 7th chapter of Joshua; and Deut. xiii.

The Popes have been just as negligent as were those Israelites of old; and even Gregory the Great† advised St.

* Edgar's Canons, 960 and 963.

N B. Other remnants of paganism are the following, the dancing round the maypole, which is an emblem of Apollo, or the Sun, on the first of May; because, about that season, all nature begins to revive. The fires on St. John's eve; this, being midsummer's eve, was sacred to the Sun, which was just then at the summer solstice: the first Christians, finding the eve suited to St. John's, very improperly permitted the custom to continue; with a change merely in the nominal purpose:—Holy Eve was another day sacred to the Sun, upon which, the harvest being over, an offering was made of fruits to him from whom they were supposed to be derived; hence the burning of nuts.—Again Lammas day suited very well to the great holiday of St. Peter, *Ad vincula*; but it was, in its original, the heathen feast of day of oblation of fruits of "trees;" in Irish *La-mas-ubhal*, pronounced thus, *La-masool*—hence the name *Lammas*; and the mixture of apples and malt, vulgarly called *Lamb's wool*, which is used upon that day.

† See Bower, ii. p. 255.

Augustine, when sent among the "Anglo Saxons, not to abolish their Paganish ceremonies; but rather to adopt them, and give them a new direction; that so the conversion of the people might be facilitated,"—a fatal error, which the history of religion, from the time of Moses to the present day, demonstrates to be an ensnaring delusion.

The Roman Catholic Church has been called, "the last undisturbed monument of your ancient national grandeur;"* and, thinking this, you have embraced it with such enthusiasm that you are blind to all its faults: but this phrase would have better applied to your round towers, which certainly have weathered the storms and revolutions of centuries, and still remain the old testimonies of the first religion of Ireland---the worship of fire, or of the sun, to which they were originally sacred, agreeably with the most approved conjectures. But I think I have shewn to you, that the above phrase is not founded in truth; and lastly, my dear fellow countrymen, if it even were true, let me appeal to your natural good sense, is it a reason for admitting Popery, blindly, without examination, with all its modern follies, or faults, as the rule by which you are to be guided implicitly, in matters which concern the eternal welfare of your immortal souls? St. Ambrose, when spoken to of something in which he was in error, said in a truly rational and Christian strain, "I am not ashamed to reform in my old days; old age ought to blush for shame, when it is incorrigible."---Is the greater antiquity of the Roman Catholic church, (even allowing that for argument sake,) a reason for your rejecting the use of the Scriptures, which it did not formerly deny to you; or for taking as proved what even its inferior clergy will command, or declare? Allowing for an instant the authority of the Pope, or of the church to be so high, will you mind either of them, if they tell you to shut your ears to the word of God? they can only have, at the most, the authority to explain to you, and not the least to exclude from you the holy revealed will of your Creator, and Redeemer, and Sanctifier. Jesus Christ tells us that "the seed is the word of God, (Luke viii. 11.) the Pope cannot therefore say, that he who gives that word to you, without the note or comment of man, is the enemy that sows the tares; for the Bible cannot be the tares, unless we suppose its author to be our enemy: those who give you the Bible without note or comment, cannot surely be the "lying teachers who shall bring in sects of perdition," or "privily bring in damnable heresies," "and deny the Lord who bought them," of whom the Pope is afraid, and against whom St. Peter warns you; (2 Pet. ii. 1.) for the word of truth cannot be "a lying teacher;" the mere Bible without notes or

* See a Pamphlet by Mr. Keogh.

comments of men cannot "bring in sects of perdition:" it is not brought in "privily," but is most openly given: and lastly, it cannot deny him who is the object of every chapter it contains, it cannot "deny the Lord," nor can those who believe in it do so—Oh no! my friends, such persons are not either enemies, or lying teachers; but, constrained by the love of Christ, and deeply valuing the salvation of even one immortal soul; they do not ask you to give up the name of your church, but invite you to come freely to the fountain head—a little lower down the waters will necessarily imbibe some taste of, and take some colour from, the earth through which they pass; but at its heavenly source, it is "a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal; proceeding out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb." (Rev. xii. 6.)

I shall close this address to you, my friends, in the beautiful words of the inspired prayer of the prophet Daniel.—"O Lord! the great and dreadful God! keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments; we have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts, and thy judgments; neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, which spake in thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land.---To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him.---Now, therefore, O our God! hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine.---Oh Lord, forgive! Oh Lord, hearken and do! defer not, for thine own sake, Oh my God!"---(Daniel, ix. 4, 5, 6, 9, and 19.)

ERRATA CORRIGENDA, &c.

Page 31, line 7, at the end, add "combined with him as such."

32, — 33, dele the words "we have already seen that."

33, — 6, dele "not only."

34, — 6, for "merc," read "more."

43, — 3 from last, for "Cane," read "Cave."

54, *note*, read Expos. Job. c. 29, l. 19. 34.

65, — 34, for "de Castra," read "a Castro."

66, — 1, I wish to narrow the extent of the assertion respecting Bellarmine: he adduces many texts in favour of the doctrine of purgatory; but I mean to say, that none of them, save that from the Maccabees, necessarily, or indeed at all, imply the doctrine of purgatory.

67, *note*, this is from his confession.

The quotation respecting the Council of Nice in p. 35, is from Gelas. Cyzicen. Act. Conc. Nic. p. 2 c. 19. See Usher's Religion, &c. p. 40.





